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By

MRS. E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH

AUTHOR OF

"Nearest and Dearest," "The Lost Lady of Lone,"
"A Leap in the Dark," "A Beautiful Fiend,"
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"WHEN SHADOWS DIE"

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WHEN SHADOWS DIE

CHAPTER I

MEETING AND PARTING

THE Earl of Enderby and his sister, Mrs. Force, acting under the directions of the earl's doctor, now set out for Germany, and in due time reached Baden-Baden. Their apartments, which had been secured by telegram, were ready for them.

They had one night's rest from the journey, and were waiting for their breakfast to be served in their private parlor, when they were surprised by the entrance of Mr. Force and all his party.

The family had been separated scarcely three months, yet to see them meet a spectator might think they had been parted for three years.

They soon paired off.

Mr. Force and his wife sat down together on a corner sofa and began to exchange confidences.

Leonidas and Odalite stood together at the window of the room, looking out upon the busy scene on the street, or rather seeming to do so, for they were really talking earnestly together on the subject of their troubled present and uncertain future.

They had not been separated for one day during their

travels; but they were to say good-by to each other very soon.

"It might be for years, and it might be forever."

And so they seized every opportunity for a *tête-à-tête.*

Wynnette and Elva hovered around their mother, in their delight at seeing her again.

The invalid earl sat for a while alone and forgotten, until little Rosemary Hedge, who was also overlooked in the family reunion, drew a hassock to the side of his easy chair, sat down and laid her little, curly black head on his knee. The action was full of pathos and confiding tenderness. The earl laid his hand on the little head and ran his thin, white fingers through the black curls. But neither spoke, or needed to speak—so well the man and the child understood each other.

"Leonidas, my boy!" called Abel Force from his corner, "I wish you would go and see if we can get rooms for us all here. This should have been seen to sooner."

"You need not stir, young sir," said the earl; and turning to his brother-in-law, he added: "Your apartments are secured, Force. As soon as I received your telegram saying that you would join me here, I sent off a dispatch to secure them for you. I hardly need to remind you that you are all my guests while we are together. But you traveled by the night express. You must have done so to reach this place so early in the day; so you will want to go to your rooms. After you have refreshed yourselves, join me here at breakfast."

Le arose at the earl's request, and pulled at the bell knob with a vigor lent by his impatience at being called from the side of his beloved, and which soon brought a servant to the room.

"Show these ladies and gentlemen to the apartments prepared for them," said the earl.

The man, with many bows, preceded the party from the room and conducted them to a large family suit of rooms on the third floor, overlooking the New Promenade.

The travelers remained some weeks at Baden-Baden. The baths were doing the earl much good. Mr. Force also needed their healing powers. Somewhere on his travels with the young people, not having his wife to look after him, he had contracted rheumatism; he could not exactly tell when or where or how, whether from exposure or rain and mist on the mountains, or from fishing on the lakes, or from sleeping in damp sheets, and drinking the sour wine of the country, or from all these causes put together, he could not say, so gradually and insidiously had the malady crept upon him, taking its chronic and least curable form. He had not mentioned one word of this in any of his letters, nor had he spoken of it on his arrival.

"Indeed," as he afterward explained, "never having had any experience to guide me, I did not recognize the malady at first, but merely took the feeling of heaviness in all my frame for over-fatigue, and even when that heaviness, being increased, became a general aching, I still thought it to be the effect of excessive fatigue. I was slow to learn and slower to confess that I had the special malady of age—rheumatism. However, I thank Heaven it is not acute It has never laid me up for a day," he added, laughing at his misfortune.

Indeed, his troubles seldom kept him from making up parties for excursions to the various objects of interest in the town and its environs.

Only when the days were both cold and wet, as is sometimes, not often, the case in early autumn there, did Abel Force allow his young folks to go forth alone under the care of their mother and the escort of Leon-

idas, while he stayed within doors and played chess with the invalid earl.

In this way the brothers-in-law became better acquainted and more attached.

"I wish you were an Englishman, Force," said the earl one day, when he had just checkmated Abel and was resting on his laurels.

"Why?"

"Not because I do not admire and respect your nationality, but simply for one reason."

"What is that?"

"I will tell you. You know, of course, that your wife is my heiress, and if she survive me, will be my successor. Now, if you were an Englishman you might get the reversion of your wife's title."

"I do not want it. I would not ask for it, nor even accept it."

"That is your republican pride. Perhaps you are right. The old earldom has fallen to the distaff at length, and it will be likely to stay there for some generations to come; for Elfrida, who will be a countess in her own right, has only daughters, which is a pity. And yet I don't know—I don't know. If those fellows at Exeter Hall, and elsewhere, get their way, in another century from this there will not be an emperor or a king, to say nothing of a little earl, to be found above ground on the surface of this fourth planet of the solar system commonly called the earth, and their bones will be as great a curiosity as those of the behemoth or the megatherium. Shall we have another game?"

And they played another, and yet another, game, in perfect silence, interrupted only by the monosyllable ejaculations of technicalities connected with their play.

The earl arose the winner; he often—not always—did. And so he was in high spirits to welcome the return of the excursionists to dinner.

Another sad day of separation was drawing near. Le was to leave them on the eleventh of October, giving himself twenty days in which to travel from Baden-Baden, in Germany, to Washington, in the United States.

This was according to his uncle's advice.

"You might stay here until the fifteenth, or even until the seventeenth, and then reach Washington by the thirty-first; but it would, under the most favorable circumstances, be so close a shave as to be perilous to risk. An officer, nay, a man, may risk anything else in the world, Le, but he must not risk his honor. You must report for duty at headquarters punctually on the first of November, at any cost of pain to yourself or to others."

"I know it, uncle—I know it, and I will do my duty. Never doubt me."

"I never do, my boy. And listen, Le. If you are prompt, as you are sure to be, you may be able to obtain orders for the Mediterranean, and then, Le, we shall see you again on this side. We will go to any port where your ship may be."

"Thank you, uncle. I shall try for orders to the Mediterranean. And I think I shall get them. You see, I have been to the west coast of Africa, and I have been to the Pacific Coast, and I really think I may be favored now with orders to the Mediterranean. However, an officer must do his duty and obey, wherever he may be sent—if it were to Behring's Straits!" concluded Le, with a dreary attempt at laughter.

When the day of parting drew very near, and the depressed spirits of the lovers were evident to all who observed them, Mr. Force suddenly proposed that he and his Odalite should accompany Le to the steamer and see him off.

This proposition was received by the two young people

with grateful joy, as a short but most welcome reprieve from speedy death, or—what seemed the same thing to them—speedy separation. It gave them two or three more days of precious life, or its equivalent—each other's society.

They cheered up under it and looked more hopefully to the future. And in a few weeks more, they decided, they should be sure to see Le again at some of the ports of the Mediterranean.

When the day of parting came, Mr. Force, Leonidas and Odalite took leave of the earl and the ladies of their party and left Baden-Baden for Ostend.

There were not so many steamship lines or such facilities for rapid transit as in these days.

Our three travelers went by rail to Ostend, thence by steamer to London, where they rested for one night, and thence by rail to Liverpool, which they reached just twelve hours before the sailing of the *Africa* for New York.

Mr. Force and Odalite took leave of Le on the deck of the steamer, and left it only among the very last that crossed the gang plank to the steam tender a moment before the farewell gun was fired and the *Africa* steamed out to sea.

A crowd of people stood on the deck of the steamer, waving last farewells to another crowd on the deck of the tender, who waved back in response, and gazed until all distinct forms faded away in the distance.

Among those on the tender who stood and gazed and waved the longest were Mr. Force and Odalite, who saw, or thought they saw, Le's figure long after everybody else had given up the attempt to distinguish their own departing friends in a mingled and fading view.

CHAPTER II

STARTLING NEWS

When the tender reached the dock Mr. Force touched his daughter's arm, and whispered:

"We can get a train back to London, and catch the night steamer to Ostend, and be with your mother by to-morrow evening. Shall we do so, or shall we go down to Chester and take a little tour through the Welsh mountains?"

"Oh, no; papa, dear. We will go home to mamma, if you please," said Odalite, who, amid all her grief, noticed the pale and worn look on the patient face that told of his silent suffering.

"Very well, my dear. I only thought it would divert you," he replied.

They drove from the docks to the Adelphi, where Mr. Force paid their hotel bill, took up the little luggage, and, with his daughter, drove on to the railway station, and caught the express train to London, a tidal train that connected with the Ostend night boat.

They reached Ostend the next day, and before night arrived at Baden-Baden, where they were received with gladness by their family, who did all that was possible to cheer the spirits of Odalite and raise her hopes for the future.

They all remained in Germany until the first of November, and then set out to spend the winter on the banks of the Mediterranean.

Their first halting place was Genoa, where they waited letters from Le.

The letters arrived at length, bringing good news. Le was assigned to the man-of-war *Eagle,* bound for the Mediterranean! Bound direct for Genoa!

Then, in perfect content, they settled down for the winter.

The earl's health was certainly improving in the mild air of sunny Italy, and his spirits were rallying in the society of his relatives, so he also decided to remain in Genoa.

Before the end of November the *Eagle* was in port, and Midshipman Force hastened to see his friends at their house on the Strada Balbi.

He had been absent only seven weeks, yet they received him with as much joy as though they had not seen him for seven years.

As long as his ship lay at anchor in the harbor his friends remained in the Strada Balbi. And whenever he could get a day or a half day off he came to them.

When the *Eagle* sailed for Nice the family left Genoa for the same city, and took up their quarters at the Hotel de la Paix, and the same pleasant intercourse was resumed.

And so the winter passed. And Mr. Force was beginning to contemplate the possibility of having his daughter freed from a merely nominal and most unfortunate marriage. To do this it would be necessary, according to his ideas of honor, that they should return to the state and the parish where the marriage ceremony had been nearly performed, but was finally interrupted.

But there was no hurry, he thought. Le was on the Mediterranean, and his duty would keep him there for two or three years longer.

There was another source of occasional uneasiness—the political condition of the United States. Ever since the presidential election, in November, dissatisfaction had spread in certain sections of the country, and trouble seemed to be brewing.

All this, coming through the newspapers to the knowledge of the absentees, gave them disturbance, but really

not much, so thoroughly confident were they all in the safety of the Union, and the grand destiny of the republic.

The clouds on the political horizon would vanish, and all would be well. No harm could come to the country, which was the Lord's City of Refuge for the oppressed of all the world.

They had heard not a word from or of Angus Anglesea since the Washington detective had traced him to Canada, and there lost him.

Le privately and most earnestly hoped that the villain had got himself sent to some State prison for life, or, well, hanged—which the midshipman thought would have been even better. At least, however, the family he had wronged so deeply seemed now to be well rid of him. But Le expressed a strong wish that his uncle would return to Maryland in the spring and have Odalite entirely freed by the law from the bond, or rather, the shadow of the bond, that lay so heavily on her life, and on his.

"No doubt I could easily have Odalite set free from her nominal marriage with a villain, who was forced to leave her at the altar before the benediction had been given. But to do this, Le, I should have to take her home to Maryland, where you could not follow her for two or three years. So, what good could come of hurry? Besides, we are no longer molested by the villain Anglesea. Be thankful for that blessing, Le, and for the rest be patient."

"'Patient!'" exclaimed the youth. "You have so often told me to be patient, and I have so long been patient, that I am unutterably impatient of the very word 'patient'!"

"I beg your pardon, Le. I will not persecute you with the word any longer," gravely replied the elder man.

"Uncle, I beg your pardon! I do, indeed. I feel myself to be an ungrateful and most unreasonable wretch! Here you have made my burden as light as you can by showing me all sorts of favors and giving me all sorts of privileges, moving about from place to place to give me opportunity of being with you all, and here am I like a beast losing my temper with you. Uncle! I don't deserve that you should pardon me!"

"Say no more, Le! Dear boy, I can understand your trials; but look on the brighter side, my lad. The best of the business now is that Anglesea does not trouble us. He seems to have died out of our lives."

"Yes, but has he, uncle? He did that once before for three years, and even advertised himself as dead and buried. But he suddenly came to life again, and sprang into our midst like a very demon, to do us all the harm that he possibly could. How do we know when he will reappear to disturb us? Uncle! I do not mean to threaten, because I do not wish to sin; but I foresee that, if Anglesea ever comes in my way again, the sight of the man will goad me to crime."

"Oh, no, Le! No, my dear boy! Do not talk so! If ever you should be tempted, pray to the Lord. And think of Odalite. To bring yourself to evil would break her heart, Le!"

"I will pray that I may never set eyes on that man again, uncle!"

Soon after this conversation, near the last of February, the family went to Rome to witness the grand grotesque pageantry of the carnival. Le could not leave his ship to go with them, and so they only remained during the week of orgies, and as soon as it was over returned to Naples, where the *Eagle* was then at anchor. Here they settled themselves in furnished lodgings, on the Strada di Toledo, for the spring months.

It was early in May.

They were all—with the exception of Le, who was on duty on his ship—assembled in a handsome front room overlooking the Strada.

The earl, whose health was so much improved that his friends hoped for its full restoration, sat in his easy chair beside a little stand, playing a game of chess with Wynnette, who had developed into a champion chess player, and was much harder to beat than ever her father had been.

Mr. Force, who, suffering from a return of his malady, lay on a sofa, pale and patient, but in too much pain to read or to talk. Odalite sat near him, silently working on the silk flower embroidery she had learned to like from her mother's example.

Elva and Rosemary, at a round table, were turning over a set of "views" left by Le on his previous visit.

Mrs. Force was opening a newspaper received that morning, and smoothing it out, preparatory to reading it aloud to her family.

Suddenly she dropped the paper, covered her face with her hands, and fell back in her chair, wailing forth the words:

"Oh, my Lord! my Lord! This is the very hardest thing to bear of all that went before!"

CHAPTER III

THE NEWS

Who that endured them ever shall forget
The emotions of that spirit-trying time,
When breathless in the mart the couriers met,
Early and late, at evening and at prime,
When the loud cannon or the merry chime
Hail'd news on news, as field was lost or won;
When hope, long doubtful, soared at length sublime,
And weary eyes awoke as day begun
Saw peace's broad banner rise to meet the rising sun.
—SCOTT.

THE first gun of our Civil War was fired, and its report was heard throughout the civilized world!

"Oh, Abel! Oh, Abel!" moaned Mrs. Force, still pale with emotion.

"What is it, my dear? Calm yourself! All that you hold nearest and dearest are in this room with you. What trouble can come upon you?" inquired her husband, rising from his couch of pain and limping toward her.

She lifted the newspaper from the floor and handed it to him.

Lord Enderby looked from one to the other in perplexity. He did not like to ask a question—he waited to hear.

Odalite, Wynnette and Elva also waited in anxious suspense for their father to explain.

Not so Rosemary. Her agony of anxiety burst forth at length in a cry:

"Oh, Mr. Force! is my mother dead, or what?"

"No one is dead, my child. And no special evil has come to you," said Abel Force. Then speaking to his expectant friends, he said: "There is a civil war at home."

His explanation was like a bombshell dropped in their midst. All shrank away aghast and in silence.

Before any one recovered speech the door was thrown open, and Le burst in the room in great excitement.

"You have heard the news!" he cried; and that was his only greeting.

"Yes, we have heard the news," gravely replied Mr. Force.

"I have come to bid you good-by. The mail that brought the news brought dispatches from the navy department ordering our ship home. We sail with the next tide; that will be in an hour. Good-by! good-by!" he said, beside himself with mingled emotions, as he hurried from one to another, taking each in his arms for a last embrace.

"But, Le—this is awfully sudden!" exclaimed Mr. Force, as he wrung the young midshipman's hand.

"Yes! yes! awfully sudden! Odalite! Oh, Odalite!" he cried, turning to his eldest cousin and once betrothed last of all, as if he had reserved his very last embrace and kiss for his best beloved—"oh, my Odalite! May God love, and bless, and guard you. Good-by! Good-by! my dearest dear!"

And Le pressed her to his heart, and turned and dashed out of the room.

"But, Le! But, Le! Wait! Can we not go to the ship and see you off?" cried Wynnette, hurrying after him, and overtaking him at the street door.

"No! no! Impossible, my dear! A boat is waiting to take me to the ship! I have barely time to reach her deck before she sails! There would be no time for last adieus there! God bless you! Take care of Odalite!"

The street door banged behind Le, and he was gone.

Wynnette had flown downstairs, but she crawled up again, dragging weary steps, "woe befreighted," behind her.

She entered the room, and sat down in silent sympathy beside Odalite, who lay back in her chair, too stunned by the shock of all that had happened to weep or to moan, or even to realize the situation.

Mrs. Force went and sat on the other side of her stricken daughter, took her hand, and said:

"My dear, nothing but prayer can help you now. You must pray, Odalite."

The girl pressed her mother's hand, but made no reply.

Mr. Force and Lord Enderby were in close conversation on the political conflict out of which the war had arisen.

Elva and Rosemary were standing together in the oriel window overlooking the street, too much startled by the suddenness of events to feel like talking.

"Let us hope that this trouble will soon be over," said the earl.

"What! be put down like one of your corn riots, by the simple reading of the 'act'?" inquired Abel Force, grimly. "No, Enderby! I know my countrymen, North and South. And the civilized world will see a war that has never been paralleled in the history of nations."

And his words proved prophetic.

After this day every mail from America was looked for in the keenest anxiety; and every mail brought the most startling and exciting news. Every schoolboy and schoolgirl is now familiar with the leading events of the war, and they need not be rehearsed here.

Among news of more general interest came some of a private nature to the Forces.

Among the rest, letters from Mrs. Anglesea, who wrote:

"You had better pack right up and come right home. 'The devil is to pay, and no pitch hot!' The people

have riz up ag'in' one another like mad. Ned Grandiere has gone into the Confederate Army. Sam sticks at home. He says war is bad for the crops, and somebody must plow and sow.

"William Elk has gone into the Union Army.

"Thanks be to goodness, Old Beever and Old Barnes and Old Copp are all past sixty, and too old to fight, or they'd turn fools with the rest; but, as it is, they're 'bliged to stay home and 'tend to their business, and take care of Mondreer and Greenbushes.

"But they do say, hereabouts, as old Capt. Grandiere —and he over seventy years old—has turned pirate, or privateer, or something of the sort, and is making war on all Uncle Sam's ships; but I can't believe it for one. And young Roland Bayard is with him—first mate—and is as deep in the mud as the captain is in the mire, and is tarred with the same brush—which I mean to say as they are both a pirating on the high seas, or a privateering, or whatever their deviltry is, together. So they say hereabouts.

"Anyway, the ship is overdue for months, and neither ship, officers nor crew has been heard of with any sort of certain sureness.

"And what I said in the beginning, old 'oman, I say in the end—as you and the ole man had better pack right up and come right home.

"But still, if it would ill convenience you at the present time to do so, you needn't come, nor likewise fret about your home. To be sure, the devil is let loose all over the country, but he hasn't entered into Mondreer or Greenbushes yet. Me and the three old men, Copp, and Beever, and Barnes, and the old niggers, take the very best of care of everything. You bet your pile on that. So do just as you think proper."

This letter filled the Forces with dismay, as it told

them that their old friends and neighbors had risen, so to speak, in arms against each other.

But the most disturbing part of the news was that which referred to old Capt. Grandiere and his mate, young Roland Bayard.

Mr. Force, from his boyhood up to middle age, and Mrs. Force, from her first arrival in Maryland to the present time, had known the old mariner intimately and respected him highly. They knew him, even in his seventieth year, to be strong, vigorous, fiery and energetic. But with all their knowledge of him they could not know, in his absence, how he would regard the Civil War, or which side he would take, if any, in the struggle.

They had known young Roland Bayard from his infancy, and known him to be pure, true, brave and heroic as his namesake, but they could not judge, without him, which side he would take in the conflict. Nor could they reconcile it with their knowledge of these men that they should run up the black flag, and wage a war after a manner little better, if any better, than piracy.

But of one course they were clear; namely, that they must keep this baleful report as to Capt. Grandiere and Mate Bayard from the hearing of little Rosemary Hedge. The child must not be made miserable by a mere rumor which might have no foundation in fact.

Mrs. Force was even more affected than her husband by the doubt that hung over the fate of the *Kitty*.

She answered her housekeeper's letter, disclaiming all belief in the story that Capt. Grandiere and Mate Bayard had turned the *Kitty* and her crew into pirates.

And for the rest, told her that they—the Force family—should not return home for some months to come, even if then.

Later on there came a letter from Miss Susanna Grandiere respecting her niece.

Miss Grandiere wrote in rather a stilted style, after the manner of her old-fashioned romances. She wrote:

"All through the beautiful summer, all through the glorious autumn, all through the desolate winter of the past twelve months we have been anticipating the exquisite happiness of beholding you again in the blooming spring, when nature rises from the grave, and arrays herself in fresh and radiant apparel.

"But, alas! evil days have fallen upon us. War stalks abroad over our beloved country, spreading ruin, misery and desolation. Brother rises up against brother, and father against son. Friends and neighbors whose hearts and minds were once united in the closest and holiest bonds of friendship and affection, are now severed and estranged in mutual hatred and malignity.

"In this spread of affliction and calamity a rumor reaches us to the effect that the condition of your husband's constitution will detain you in foreign countries for a considerable time to come.

"If this report be truthful, and you should contemplate a further sojourn in the Eastern hemisphere, I must implore you still to retain my beloved niece under your protection until you can procure some responsible escort to convey her across the ocean to the home of her childhood.

"I should not venture to take the liberty of preferring this request did I not accord the most perfect credence to your protestations of attachment to our beloved child, and of enjoyment in her society, and of the invaluable benefit she herself derives from foreign travel."

This, and much more to the same purpose and in the same style, wrote Miss Grandiere.

Mrs. Force showed this letter to Rosemary, and then

had a talk with her, and found that the child was quite willing to do whatever her friends should think best.

Then Mrs. Force answered the letter, condoling with Miss Grandiere on the state of the country, but also expressing the pleasure she and all her family would feel in keeping little Rosemary with them as long as the child might be permitted to stay.

Still later on letters were received from Le. His ship was at Charleston, forming one of the blockading fleet.

Late in the summer of that year the Forces went again to the hot baths of Baden-Baden for the benefit of the husband and father's health, which was giving the whole family much concern.

CHAPTER IV

ROSEMARY IS STARTLED

STRANGE to say, that while Abel Force seemed in danger of becoming a confirmed invalid, the condition of his delicate brother-in-law improved every day.

He no longer required the arm of his valet to lean on, or even the help of a cane to walk with.

One day his sister said to him:

"Francis, I do believe that you have been more of a hypochondriac than of a real invalid, after all."

"Elf," he answered, "I am inclined to suspect that you are right. Certainly most of my ailments, real or imaginary, have vanished under the influence of change, motion and society."

As the earl continued to improve in health and strength, his sister watched him with a new interest.

On another day she said to him:

"Francis, why don't you marry?"

Lord Enderby started, and then he laughed.

"What has put that into your head?" he inquired.

"My anxious interest in your future—now that you have a future, brother."

"Would you, who are my heir presumptive, wish me to marry?"

"Indeed, I would! You would be so much better and happier! Think of it, Francis!"

"My dearest, I am both too old and too young to fall in love!" laughed the earl.

"What rubbish! 'Too old and too young!' What do you mean by such absurdity?"

"I have passed my first youth of sentiment, and I have not yet reached my second childhood of senility! Therefore, I am both too old and too young to fall in love."

"Nonsense! That is not true; and, even if it were, you are neither too young nor too old to marry. It is not necessary that you should 'fall in love.' You might meet some lady, however, whom you could love, and esteem, and marry."

"Where should I be likely to find such a lady? My dear, I have never gone into society at all. Since my return from India I have led a secluded life, on account of my health."

"On account of your hypochondria, you mean! Now, Francis, you must change all that. In the beginning of the next London season you must open your house on Westbourne Terrace, and entertain company."

"Will you do the honors, Elfrida?"

"Of course I will," replied the lady.

"And you can bring out your two daughters, and present them at court."

"Yes, I might do that."

"Very well."

Had the earl felt disposed to look about him for a

wife, he might have found a suitable one in Baden-Baden.

There were many of the English nobility and gentry staying there for the benefit of the baths. Many very attractive young ladies of rank were in the matrimonial market. But, to tell the truth, the invalid earl, either from real ill health or from hypochondria, was very shy of strangers, and better liked to stroll, or ride, or drive with "the children," as he called his nieces and their young friend, than to linger in the parlors of the hotel or the pavilions of the place.

In their rambles Odalite seldom joined them. She preferred to stay with her suffering father, and share the labors of her mother in the sick room. The earl and the three younger girls usually set out together.

Wynnette and Elva walking on before; the earl, with little Rosemary's hand clasped in his own, followed behind.

Ever since that day, now more than a year ago, when the reunited members of the Force family met at Baden-Baden, and paired off—Mr. and Mrs. Force on one sofa, Odalite and Le on another, and Wynnette and Elva on the window seat, leaving the earl, as it were, "out in the cold," and quite forgotten, and little Rosemary, also temporarily forgotten, had drawn a hassock to the side of his easy chair and sat down and laid her little curly black head on his knee, in silent sympathy—ever since that day the earl and the child had been fast friends. In her tender little heart she pitied him for his weakness and illness, just as she might have pitied any poor man in any rank of life, and she had fallen into a habit of silent sympathy with him, and of drawing her hassock to the side of his chair, when they were all indoors, and of taking his hand when they were out walking. Even now, when the invalid had recovered health, strength and spirits, these habits of the child, once formed, were

not easily to be broken. She no longer pitied him, because she saw that he was no longer an object of pity; but she drew her hassock to his side indoors, and took his hand and walked with him outside. She seemed to think that he belonged to her, or she to him, or they to each other.

One day they were sauntering slowly through the grounds of the Conversation-Haus. Wynnette and Elva were flitting on before them.

Rosemary's hand was—not on the earl's arm—but in his hand. He was so very much taller than the girl that he led her like a child.

There had been a pause in their talk, when the earl gently closed his fingers over hers, and said:

"My little one, I love you very much."

"Oh, I hope you do, and it is so kind of you!" warmly answered the child, returning the pressure of his hand and acting toward him as she would have acted toward her uncle.

"Then, you do care for me a little?" he said.

"Oh, yes, indeed, I care for you a great deal. I am very fond of you," said Rosemary, warmly, squeezing his fingers.

"How old are you, Rosemary?" he gravely inquired.

"I shall soon be seventeen."

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, turning and looking down on her.

"Yes, indeed!" she answered, positively.

"Well, you are such a quaint, little old lady, that I am not surprised, after all. You might have been fifteen, or you might have been twenty. But seventeen! That is a sweet age—the age at which the Princess Royal of England was married!"

"Indeed!" eclaimed Rosemary, in her turn.

"Yes, indeed!" he replied, with a smile.

And then there was silence between the two for a few minutes.

The earl was meditating. The child was uneasy, and wondering why she was so.

"Little friend," he said, at last, "you and I seem very good friends."

"Oh, we are! And it is so very good of you to be friends with me!" she answered, warmly, squeezing his fingers in her small hand.

"And we are really fond of each other."

"Oh, very, very fond of one another, and it is so kind of you!"

"But why should you say it is kind of me, little sweet herb?"

"Oh, why, because you are so old and so grand; and I am so little every way!" she said, with another squeeze of his fingers.

The earl winced; but whether at her words or her action, who could say?

"Am I so old, so very old, then, Rosemary?" he gravely inquired.

"Oh, no, no; I did not mean that! Of course, I didn't mean that you are as old as Mr. Force, who is forty-five; but I meant—I meant—I meant—you are so very much grown up, to be so kind as to walk and talk with a girl like me as much as you do."

"Well, my dear, do you not like to have me walk and talk with you?"

"Oh, yes! indeed, indeed I do! Oh, you know I do!" she answered, fervently.

Again the earl was silent for a few moments, and then, drawing her small hand into the bend of his arm, he asked:

"Rosemary, would you like that you and I should walk and talk together every day for the rest of our lives?"

She turned and looked up into his face, as if she wished to read his meaning.

He smiled into her upraised eyes.

"Are you in earnest?" she inquired.

"Perfectly, Rosemary. Do you think I would jest with you on such a subject?"

"No! but I thought you knew me so well that you would know without asking that I would love dearly to walk and talk with you every day all our lives long, if we could! But how could we? Some of these days I shall go back to Maryland, and then we shall part and never meet again! Oh! I hate to think that we shall never meet again. You do seem so near to me! So very near to me! As if you were my own, my very own! Oh, sir! I beg your pardon! that was very presumptuous! I ought to have said—I ought to have said——" She stopped and reddened.

"What, my child? You have said nothing wrong or untrue. What do you think you ought to have said?" the earl inquired, in a caressing tone.

"I think I should have said, that I feel so near to you —that I feel as if I were your own, your very own! It was too, too arrogant in me to say that I feel as you belonged to me. I should have said, as if I belonged to you," she explained. And then she laughed a little, as in ridicule of her own little ridiculous self.

His hand tightened on hers as he replied:

"Suppose we compromise the question and say that we belong to each other?"

"Yes, that is it! And you are so good."

"And you really wish that we two should walk and talk together every day for the rest of our lives?"

"Oh, yes; if it could be so!"

"Rosemary," he said, very gravely, as he still held and pressed her hand, "there is but one way in which it could be so."

He paused, and she looked up.

How long he paused before he could venture to startle the child by his next words:

"By marriage. Rosemary, dear, will you marry me?"

She turned pale, but did not withdraw her astonished eyes from his face.

"What do you say, little friend?" inquired the suitor.

"Oh, oh, oh!" was what she said.

"Does that mean yes or no, Rosemary?"

She did not answer.

"You do not like me well enough to marry me, then, Rosemary?"

"Oh, yes, I do! Indeed, indeed I do; I would marry you in a minute, but—but—but——"

"But—what?"

"I am engaged!"

CHAPTER V

THE EARL IS STARTLED

He held her off to get a better view of her face. Then he stared at her.

"You! Engaged?" he cried.

She nodded two or three times in reply.

"Such a mite as you! Why, how long have you been engaged, pray?"

"I—don't quite know. Ever since I can remember."

"Oh! a family arrangement between your parents and your betrothed husband's, I suppose?"

"Oh, no; not at all! Only between him and me."

"At that early age! Do babies betroth themselves in America?"

"I don't quite know; but we did! And we were not

both babies. He was a schoolboy, but I think I was a baby at first."

"At first, very likely! Well, when are you to be married?"

"I don't quite know. But not until Roland gets his rights and comes into his estates."

"Ah! there is litigation? But who is this happy man Roland?"

"He is a mate on a merchantman at present. But when he gets his rights, I am sure he will be a nobleman of high rank, and maybe a prince of royal race."

"Oh!" said the earl, with a curious smile. Then, growing suddenly very grave, he inquired:

"My dear child, do your parents know anything about your relations with this—adventurer?"

"He is not an adventurer," said Rosemary.

"But when he, a skipper's mate, represents himself to be a man of rank, kept out of his rights——"

"But he don't represent himself to be any other than what he seems!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon, my dear! I thought you said he did."

"No; oh, no! I said that I feel sure that when he gets his rights, he will be a nobleman or a prince!"

"Ah! but why should you think so, my dear!"

"Oh! no one could look at Roland Bayard and not know him to be one of princely rank!" exclaimed Rosemary, with such solemn fervor that the earl turned and gazed at her.

"And is this the only reason you have for thinking the young man of gentle blood?"

"No! not only his looks, but his voice, speech, tone, manner, gesture—all proclaim him of noble blood!"

As Rosemary spoke, she suddenly turned and looked intently at the earl, and then she added:

"Yes! It is true! It is not imagination! I have thought of it often, though I never spoke of it before!"

"Of what, my dear?"

"Of Roland Bayard's likeness to you!"

"To me, my dear?"

"Yes, to you! But for the difference in age and in health, he is as much like you as one man can be to another!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed!"

"An imaginary or an accidental likeness, my child. But, Rosemary, to return to yourself. Do your parents, or guardians, know anything of your relations with this questionable stranger?"

"He is not a questionable stranger. He was brought up among us at home. Did I not tell you he used to ride me on his shoulder when he was a boy and I was a baby?"

"Then, if he is not a stranger, you must know all about him, and whether he is of high or low degree."

"We do know all about him, but nothing at all about his family. He was saved from a ship that was wrecked on our coast, and he was the only one saved, and there was not a mark on him or his clothing to identify him. Mr. Force undertook to provide for him, and placed him with Miss Sybilla Margaretta Bayard, who was herself descended from a great English duke, though no one would ever think so to look at her! Mr. Force also sent Roland to school and afterward to college, and he would have sent him to the Naval Academy, at Annapolis, only he had already used all his influence to get Leonidas entered there, and he could not ask the same favor for Roland. So Roland, being bent upon going to sea, entered the merchant service."

"Ah! I see. But, my child, it seems to me that you have not yet answered the question that I have twice

put to you: Do your parents, or guardians, know of the engagement between you and this young man?"

"I have only one parent—my mother. My father was lost at sea, before I was born, and left no property and no will, because his ship went down, with everything on board. My mother has some property, and so has Aunt Sukey, and they take care of me," said Rosemary; and that was all she said at the time.

The earl looked at her curiously.

Was the child purposely evading his question?

No; the grave little face was too true for that thought.

"Does your mother or your aunt know of your relations with young—young——"

"Roland Bayard?"

"Yes."

"Why, I think every one in our neighborhood must know all about it! Because we all know all about our neighbors, and some say that they know more of us than we do of ourselves, and that we know more of them than they do of themselves."

"I think that quite likely. But, do your friends approve of your engagement?"

"Not now; but they will when Roland comes into his rights."

"You poor child!" murmured the earl, in a low tone. Then, speaking in a clearer voice, he asked:

"Rosemary, would you marry this young man without the approbation of your friends?"

"No, never," she answered, solemnly.

"That is right. Now, then, if your friends were to counsel you to accept another suitor whom they approved, would you do so?"

"No, never," replied the child, more emphatically than before.

"Then what would you do?"

"I would be an old maid, like Aunt Sukey. I never

would marry Roland Bayard against the will of my mother and my aunt; nor would I ever marry any one else, even to please them. I would be a maiden lady, like Miss Susannah Grandiere."

"Little true heart! Well, little friend, I will not try, through your guardians, to marry you against your will. Neither, I think, will I marry any one else. And in any case, we shall always be friends, shall we not, little sweet herb?"

"Always! And it is so good of you to say so!" exclaimed Rosemary, giving his hand another fond squeeze.

They sauntered on in silence until they overtook Wynnette and Elva, who had sat down on a garden seat to wait for them.

"It is time to go home to luncheon," said Wynnette, "and I am starved."

They turned their steps toward their hotel and reached it in time to join Mr. and Mrs. Force and Odalite at luncheon at their usual hour.

That afternoon, while Mr. Force was taking his daily nap and the young girls were resting in their chambers, the earl found himself alone with his sister in their private parlor.

"Elfrida," he said, "I want you to tell me something about this little protégé of yours."

"Rosemary Hedge?"

"Yes."

"Well, she is the daughter of the late Capt. Hedge, of the merchant service, and of his wife, Dorothy Grandiere, the daughter of the late Gideon Grandiere, of St. Mary's. Her family is one of the oldest and best in the State. And her friends have intrusted her to us for the benefit of travel. That is all there is about Rosemary Hedge."

"No, not quite all. The little one tells me that she is engaged to be married."

"Who? Rosemary?"

"Yes."

"Engaged to be married!"

"Yes."

"This is news to me! I never even suspected such a thing. Nor do I know how she has ever had an opportunity of being woed, far less won!" exclaimed the lady, in surprise.

"And yet the child honestly thinks that you know all about it," replied the earl.

" I know nothing. And I am really distressed at the news you tell me. Have I been so absorbed in the care of my sick husband as to have neglected the interests of the orphan child? What adventurer has picked her up, in the name of Heaven? Tell me, Francis, if you know."

"Do you know anything of a young fellow called Roland Bayard?" significantly inquired the earl, fixing his eyes intently on the face of his sister.

That face paled under his wistful gaze; but the lady recovered herself in a few moments, and replied:

"Yes; he is a young man who in infancy was cast upon our shores from a wrecked ship. He was cared for by Mr. Force, who placed him in charge of a respectable woman and afterward sent him to school and to college."

"Does any one know anything about his parentage?"

"He was the sole survivor of the wreck. There was not a mark on his clothing or on his person to give a clew to his parentage. But, as Mr. Force has practically adopted him, he will not need to investigate his own antecedents. He is in the merchant service now."

"Yes, I have heard so much from Rosemary. But now as to his character?"

"He is above reproach. A not unworthy namesake of

two heroes—Roland and Bayard. But why do you inquire into the history of this young person?"

"Because it is to him that Rosemary is engaged, or thinks herself engaged."

"Oh," laughed the lady, "that is an old story."

"It cannot be an old story, since the child is but seventeen."

"It is relatively an old story. When he was a schoolboy he was much favored by his friends the Grandieres, who lived at Oldfield, near Forest Rest, where his foster-mother, Miss Bayard, lived, and where Roland was reared. Rosemary was a baby. He used to pet her very much and tell her that she was his sweetheart, and his little wife, and all such childish nonsense as that. And I think they kept it up until Rosemary was sent to boarding school with our girls. Since that time—some five years ago now—I think there has been no more of it. I thought it was all forgotten long ago."

"But it is not, you see. The child thinks that she is engaged to him."

"I wonder if she is attached to him," said the lady, thoughtfully.

"I do not quite know. Perhaps, as she believes herself to be engaged, she may also only believe that she is attached to him. It is a subject upon which one cannot very closely cross-examine a young girl."

"No, you could not; but I must," replied the lady.

"Without mentioning my name, if you please, Elfrida," said the earl, who also religiously refrained from telling his sister of his proposal to Rosemary, lest Mrs. Force should try to influence the girl in his favor. And he did not wish the latter to be worried or coerced in any way.

"Certainly without mentioning your name. I shall know how to manage with tact and discretion," replied the lady.

"One word more, Elfrida. Would you approve of a marriage between this Roland Bayard and Rosemary Hedge?" inquired the earl.

"Yes, I should."

"That is all."

"But I have not the disposal of the child's hand, so my own approval goes for nothing."

"It is enough," said the earl, and he opened the window looking from the parlor to the balcony and went out there to walk and smoke.

CHAPTER VI

A STRANGE MEETING

THE middle of October found the Forces with their party again at Rome, settled in their old quarters.

News of the war came by every mail, bringing accounts of battles fought, and lost or won.

They were of those few who in the dreadful struggle could not take any side. They only longed for peace and reconciliation. They passed the winter in Rome, but in the early spring Mr. and Mrs. Force and their daughters began to long for their native country even more than for their particular home.

There seemed no present prospect of an end to the fratricidal war. The holocausts of youth, manhood and heroism offered up monthly to the Devil of Discord did not seem to appease his rapacity.

Every mail brought news of new battles and of thousands and tens of thousands slain on either side; the storm of war raging more and more furiously as the months went on.

"Elfrida!" said Mr. Force one day, "I cannot stand it

any longer! We must go home, my dear, and be with our country in her need! Not to burn and slay and rob on one side or the other, but to nurse the wounded and feed the hungry, and clothe the naked—and give all our time, money and energy to this needful work. You and your daughters and even your crippled husband can do this much to abate the pain of the age!"

He had said words to the same effect before, but never with so much of sorrowful earnestness as now.

"Well, we will go, Abel. Yes; it is indeed our duty to do so. Besides, our Odalite is wasting away with hope deferred! We have not heard from Le for so many months! He may be dead on some crowded battlefield, or ill and delirious in some hospital, or in some prison! We might find out his fate by going home. And then there is poor little Rosemary fretting out her heart about young Bayard, who has never been heard of since he sailed with Capt. Grandiere, now nearly three years ago! We might find out something satisfactory about him. We all need to go home! There is no one but Wynnette who is not breaking down under this anxiety and uncertainty! Wynnette thanks Heaven every day that Sam Grandiere chooses to stay home and mind his crops. As for Elva, she makes every one's trouble her own and suffers for and with all. Yes, we all need to go home."

"And our home and our country needs us," added Mr. Force.

So it was decided that they should return home as soon as passages for their whole party could be secured.

Mrs. Force dreaded to tell her brother of the impending separation.

The earl had grown so much better in health, spirits and happiness while traveling in their company, that it would seem like relegating him to gloom, solitude and despondency to send him back alone to his old life at Enderby Castle.

She took the time immediately after breakfast the next morning to break the news to him.

"Going! Going back to America!" he exclaimed, in astonishment.

"Yes. It is our bounden duty. The war is not the temporary disturbance that you thought it was to be. It is growing more terrible every month. It may last yet for years. We must go to our home and do the best we can for everybody," replied the lady. And then she went over the whole subject as it had been discussed between herself and her husband.

"Yes, my dear, it is your duty to go home," admitted the earl.

"Still, my dear brother, we are very sorry to leave you. I hope, however, that you will not go back to Enderby Castle, to your old solitary life there. It is very bad for you. I hope you will go up to London, and open your house on Westbourne Terrace, and call your friends together and entertain them, even though I shall not be there with my daughters to help you, as I had once hoped to be."

"I shall not go to London, Elfrida. I have no friends there, and I hate society. No; I shall go to the United States with you," said the earl.

"You don't mean it!" exclaimed Mrs. Force, between surprise, pleasure and incredulity.

"Yes; I do most certainly mean it. I have never seen America, and though the state of civil war may not be the most pleasant aspect under which to view a new country, yet it is certainly the most interesting. And so, Elfrida, if you have no objection, I shall go with you to America."

"You know that I am delighted at the thought of having you," said the lady.

"Has Force written to engage passage?" inquired the earl.

"He intends to write this morning to inquire about the first ship on which he can get berths for all our large party to New York."

"Then ask him to see about two additional berths for me and my valet."

Thus it was arranged that the whole family party, including the earl, should go to America together.

In due time the answer from the agent of the Cunard line arrived. They could all be accommodated on the *Asia,* which would sail on the twenty-third of March.

"This is the ninth. We have just two weeks to get ready in. We had best start for Liverpool as soon as possible and make our final preparations for the voyage there," said Mr. Force, after he had read the letter to his assembled family.

"And, oh, papa, let somebody go to Enderby Castle to fetch Joshua," exclaimed Wynnette.

"Why, my dear girl, the old dog may be dead," said the earl.

"Oh, no, he is not dead! I write to Mrs. Kelsey every week to ask about dear Joshua, and he is very well. And he is not at all an old dog. He is only nine years old. I remember him ever since he was a puppy."

"Well, it has been over two years since he saw you, and he has forgotten you by this time."

"Oh, no, he hasn't. We were away from home three years and three months, and he never forgot us. You ought to have seen how he met us!"

"Well, my dear, when we get to Liverpool, I will telegraph to one of my grooms to bring the dog to us."

"Dear uncle! how I love you!"

A week from this time the whole party were settled at the Adelphi Hotel, in Liverpool, to await the day of their sailing for New York.

Mr. Force kept his room. The Earl of Enderby spent hours in his own apartment with his family solicitor and

his land steward, both of whom had been summoned by telegraph to meet him at Liverpool.

The ladies of the family spent their days in final shopping, providing themselves, among other conveniences, with thick linsey-woolsey suits for sea wear, and with heavy Astrakhan wool shawls for wraps.

In due time the groom from Enderby arrived with Wynnette's dog in his charge. Space does not permit to describe the interview between the two. It is enough to hint that Joshua, in dog language, bitterly reproached his mistress for breaking faith with him, and deserting him for so long a time, and then magnanimously forgave her, while Wynnette was all apologies for the past and protestations for the future.

On Saturday, the twenty-third of March, the whole party embarked on board the ocean steamer *Asia,* then at anchor in the Mersey, and bound to sail for New York at twelve, noon, of that day.

There was the usual crowd on deck; with the usual partings; friends departing, and friends who had come to send them off; some grave, some cheerful, some merry, some despondent.

At length this was all interrupted by the shout of the first mate from the poop:

"All ashore!"

And the last hurried good-bys were spoken, and the last embraces given, and the friends of the voyagers hastened over the gang plank to the steam tender which had brought them to the ship.

Then the farewell gun was fired, and the *Asia* stood out to sea—her passengers standing in lines to gaze on the receding land.

Mr. Force and his party were walking up and down the deck of the steamer, when they saw coming from the opposite direction a figure so remarkable that it would at once have attracted attention anywhere.

It was the tall, stout figure of an old man, with a fresh, red face, clear blue eyes, a white mustache, and a commanding presence. He wore the uniform of an American skipper, with its flat, gold-rimmed cap.

As he approached Mr. Force stared, and then started and held out his hand, exclaiming:

"Capt. Grandiere! You here! Why, where did you drop from, and where is Roland Bayard?"

The gruff old sailor stopped to lift his cap to the ladies, and to shake hands all around, and to be introduced to the Earl of Enderby, and to shake hands with him, before he replied to Mr. Force's first question:

"My ship, the *Kitty,* was taken by that infernal pirate, the *Argente.* I was set ashore, alone, on the English coast. I had some correspondents at Liverpool, who supplied me with funds to return home. That is all."

"But—where is Roland Bayard?"

"With the pirates."

CHAPTER VII

AN OLD SALT

"Among the pirates, Capt. Grandiere? Roland Bayard among the pirates?" exclaimed Mr. Force, while Mrs. Force closed her lips with a sudden motion and grew a shade paler. Rosemary began to tremble, and the other young girls to look anxious.

"Come aft! Let us find seats somewhere where we will not be spied or overhauled, and I will tell you all about it," said the old skipper, moving down toward the stern, where the deck was almost deserted by the other passengers, who were all gathered forward, leaning over the bulwarks and taking a last look at the receding shores of England.

They found seats on the wooden benches, and sat down.

The old skipper took off his cap and wiped his large, red face and close-cropped gray head, and then said:

"I didn't expect to see you here. I should as soon have thought of seeing Oldfield farmhouse standing up before me, right in my path, as a group of old neighbors, with my little niece in the midst of them. Heavens and earth—how a civil war shakes people up! I dare say, now, you all left on account of the war."

"No," said Mr. Force, "we left before the war to visit my brother-in-law here, and to give our young people some advantage in foreign travel. My own ill health has detained us abroad for more than two years. We return now on account of the war."

"Good Lord! Abel Force, you are not thinking of going into the army in your crippled condition!"

"No, not exactly. But we can all be useful in the hospitals—even my wife and daughters—in caring for the sick and wounded soldiers, and for the widows and orphans of the dead, so far as our strength and means will go."

"Ah! that is something else! When did you hear from the folks at home? I have not heard from them for years."

"I got a letter a week ago from your niece, Miss Grandiere. Your nephew, William Elk, is in Richmond, on Gen. Lee's staff; your nephew, Thomas Grandiere, is in New Orleans, with Gen. Butler, and your grandnephew, Edward Grandiere, is with Farragut, in Mobile Bay. Sam has elected to stay at home, follow the plow, and take care of the women."

"Sam has the only solid head in the family, except my own! Look at that, now! Brothers and kinsmen shooting each other down, running each other through the body, blowing each other up, as if they were at war

with a foreign enemy! Oh, Lord! Lord!" groaned the old skipper, flinging down his cap with force upon the deck, and furiously wiping his perspiring face.

"It is grievous enough; but it is human nature, and we cannot change it. The strangest part of it all is that the men composing the rank and file of each army have no personal ill will toward their antagonists. Each fights from a sense of duty. Each invoke the blessing of God upon their arms. There was a time, Grandiere, in our lives, when peace reigned so long that we all began to believe that war belonged only to history, and barbaric history at that, and had passed away forever, as one of the last relics of barbarism. It was the Mexican War that woke us up from our dream of the millennium. And, since that, there has been in one part of the civilized world or another almost incessant and most ruinous war. So when we call ourselves a Christian, civilized and enlightened people——"

"We tell a lot of bragging lies! Out with it, papa, in plain English!" put in Wynnette, who had held her tongue until it ached.

"Who is this girl?" inquired the old skipper.

"My second daughter, Wynnette. Surely, I introduced her to you," said the squire.

"So you did! But there are so many of them, you know! I used to dandle this one on my knee when she was a baby; but she has grown out of my knowledge!" said the old skipper. Then turning to Wynnette, he grasped her hand, and said:

"Right you are, my dear! We are a lot of braggarts and ignoramuses! So far from being Christians, civilized and enlightened, we do not even know what these terms imply. We are heathen, barbarians, and we live in the twilight. Right you are, my dear, as to your opinions, but wrong in your way of putting them. Interrupting your father. Discipline should be main-

tained, my dear. Remember that!" said the old skipper, not unkindly.

Before the astonished Wynnette could reply, Rosemary put in her piteous little plaint, and said:

"Oh, Uncle Gideon! dear Uncle Gideon! Tell us about—about——" She meant to say "Roland Bayard," but she reddened, and substituted: "The pirates!"

"Of course! That is what I brought you here for. You have heard about the pirate Silver, and his ship, the *Argente?*"

"I have seen notices of depredations made by the *Argente.* It is a privateer in the Confederate service, is it not?" inquired Mr. Force.

"Privateer? Yes, and worse! It is a pirate! In the Confederate service? No; no further than running the blockade, to carry in merchandise to sell at ruinous prices, would go! The *Argente* is a privateer, a blockade runner, a slaver, and a pirate. Just as, a few years ago, we thought war had passed away from the face of the earth forever, so we thought that piracy had been swept from the sea. But we were mistaken in both cases. Our Civil War, the blockading of our Southern ports, the emancipation, and consequent stampede of the negroes, have brought into action a fleet of sea robbers who call themselves privateers, and pretend to be in the service of this or that faction, but who are really pirates and slavers. They are armed to the teeth and are manned by the most reckless desperadoes gathered from all nations—mostly jail birds, convicts, criminals. They take our merchant ships, they steal slaves from the West Indies, run the blockade and sell them in our Southern ports; or, with equal impartiality, when opportunity is given, they decoy slaves from the Southern plantations by the promise of a free passage to the North, and they carry them to the West Indies, where they sell them to the planters. The most notorious of these brigands of

the sea is the *Argente.* I have never yet heard of any of them being taken."

The old sailor having talked himself out of breath, stopped, wiped his forehead, and flung his rolled handkerchief with force upon the deck.

"But, Uncle Gideon—dear Uncle Gideon—tell us about—about the pirates," pleaded Rosemary, pale with sorrow.

"My pet, I have told you about the pirates," grunted the skipper.

"But—but—about—about—the loss of the *Kitty,*" pleaded Rosemary.

The old skipper snatched up his cap from the deck and flung it down again with violence. Then he said:

"Yes! Devil fly away with them! They took the *Kitty!* I can't talk about it, girl! The devil takes possession of me every time I think of it! They took the *Kitty!* That is all that is in it! Maybe some time or other, when the devil forsakes me, I will tell you all about it, but not now—not now!"

"Tell us something at least of Roland Bayard," said Wynnette.

"I did tell you! He is among the pirates."

"But in what capacity? Is he a prisoner or a volunteer?" persisted the girl.

"Oh! oh, Wynnette! Roland Bayard could never be a volunteer among the pirates. He would suffer himself to be killed first! Yes—to be tortured to death first! Yes—yes—to be slowly tortured to death first! Oh, Roland! Roland!" wailed Rosemary, too deeply distressed for her childhood's friend to conceal her emotions.

Capt. Grandiere, touched by the trouble on the quaint little face, pulled himself together, patted her head, and said:

"Don't cry, litle girl! Roland is not a volunteer in

the pirate crew. I never believed that for one minute, though Silver, the head devil, told me so. No, my child, he is a prisoner among the pirates—I am sure of that."

"Oh, then that is some comfort! I would rather they should keep him a prisoner, or even kill him, than make him wicked! Indeed, I would, Uncle Gideon. But how comes he to be among the pirates and you here? He a captive, and you free? Tell me that, Uncle Gideon," said the little creature, with a shade of reproach in her troubled tones.

And while Rosemary waited in suspense for the answer there was another who listened anxiously to catch its every word. This was Elfrida Force.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LOSS OF THE "KITTY"

"I WILL tell you, my girl, though I hate to talk of it. About a month ago I sailed from Havana, bound to London, with a cargo of rum, tobacco and sweetmeats. The weather was fine, and we had a good voyage until we came within four or five days' sail of port. A sail had been following us all day long. We did not know she was following us, nor could we make out by our best glass what she was. She was the only sail in sight. As night closed in she gained on us. That was certain. But still we could not make her out. She did not come near enough for that, for the *Kitty* is a pretty fast clipper herself. As night darkened we lost sight of the strange sail, without any misgivings. But in the gray of the morning she was alongside of us! Hold on! The devil is getting into me again!" exclaimed the old sea dog,

snatching Mr. Force's hat from his head and flinging it with vehemence upon the deck.

"The fortunes of war, captain—the fortunes of war! Be patient!" said Abel Force.

"The fortunes of murder, robbery, arson, piracy! There was no fight!"

"The will of Providence, then."

"The will of the devil! You shan't lay their murders, and robberies, and arsons, and piracies upon Providence! That would be blasphemy! There was no struggle! What could our unarmed little Baltimore clipper do—though every one was a hero—against a pirate ship of twenty-four guns, manned by the desperate offscourings of the galleys and the convict prisons, all armed to the teeth, bristling with pistols, daggers and cutlasses? Nothing at all! They boarded us, walked into us and through us, and made prisoners of our men, took possession of our ship, then put the men into two open boats and sent them adrift, to sink or swim, carried off me and young Roland captives to their own deck, and finally sent off an officer and a detail of their devilish pirates to work the *Kitty*—and Satan only knows where they carried her and her valuable cargo of rum and tobacco! We parted company then and there. I never saw young Roland after that. I believe he did make some resistance, and was wounded. I saw him bleeding and carried below, and I never saw him again."

Here the captain made an involuntary dash at the earl's cap, but his hand was intercepted by Mr. Force.

"He'll scalp us next," said Wynnette.

"Umph! Umph! Umph!" grunted the captain.

"Oh, Uncle Gideon! Oh, Uncle Gideon!" moaned Rosemary, while Mrs. Force gripped her own hands firmly in silent trouble.

"Don't cry, honey! I believe he is safe enough and will turn up all right. I called them murderers! And,

no doubt at all, some of that criminal crew were murderers, and worse than murderers, if such could be! But they did no murder in my sight! They might—had they chosen—they might have massacred all hands aboard the *Kitty,* but they didn't! They put the men in open boats and set them afloat to take their chance; and then—for some reason well known to himself, but quite unknown to me—Capt. Silver took young Bayard and myself on board the *Argente.* I said I never saw Roland after he was taken down below, nor did I! But I did not fail to inquire for him. The head devil told me that the young man was all right; that his wound was only skin deep; that his men never killed or wounded men whom they could so easily overpower and capture without bloodshed; and especially in the case of a fine young seaman who might become useful to them."

"Oh, Uncle Gideon! Then they did only take Roland on board to make a pirate of him!"

"Of course they did, my dear; for when I asked to see Roland, Silver told me, with a satanic laugh, that the young man was 'in retreat,' preparatory to entering his novitiate in the holy orders of bold buccaneers, roaring sea rovers, and that no outsiders should have access to him, for fear they might shake his good resolutions and even win him back to the selfish world."

"What a devil!" exclaimed Wynnette.

"Every day I inquired about Roland, and each day I received answers which would have made me believe that the boy was gradually being persuaded to become a pirate—if I had not known that Roland Bayard could never become so perverted."

"No, never, never, never!" firmly declared Rosemary.

"But while Bayard was kept a close prisoner, I had the run of the deck," continued the captain. "One day I asked Silver where he was bound. He told me, with infernal insolence, that he should touch on the coast of

England, put me on shore, and then go about his own business. Two days after, we came to anchor on a lonely part of the coast of Cornwall. It was a dark night, and they put me in a boat and took me ashore and left me there, with just two sovereigns in my pocketbook. They had robbed me of thousands, but they left me that much to take me to London. I don't know why, I am sure, that it should sometimes occur to a scoundrel to stop short of the extreme wickedness he might perpetrate! But at all events, Silver did stop short of the crime of leaving me penniless to perish at night on a desolate seacoast. I passed the night in a solitary fisherman's cottage. In the morning there was not a sign of the *Argente* to be seen. She had sailed again. I walked to the nearest railway station, distant twelve miles, and there I took the 'Parliamentary' to London—for I had to economize my small funds. I went down to the West India Docks, where I was as well known as the church clock, and saw some of my correspondents, told my story, got all the money I wanted, and took the express to Liverpool; reached there yesterday, engaged a berth, and here I am!"

"Was your ship and cargo insured?" inquired Mr. Force.

"From keel to masthead," answered the skipper. "But that was against fire and water and accidents. Now, I don't know whether being taken by a pirate would be considered as coming under the clause of accidents or not. But, anyway, you know the insurance companies are bound to make a fuss before they pay a cent. They always do."

"Your losses, then, I fear, may be heavy."

"Yes, but not ruinous, even if the insurance companies do not pay, because I have still the *Blue Bird* that George sails."

"Where is Capt. George now?" inquired Mr. Force.

"In the China seas somewhere if he has not been taken by a privateer. But where is your nephew, Leonidas?" inquired Capt. Grandiere.

"We do not know. We have not heard from Le for many months. When we last heard it was through a letter from him dated on board the United States ship *Eagle,* then about to sail under sealed orders. We are all, therefore, naturally very anxious," replied Mr. Force.

"Ay! ay! These are anxious times for us all. But, at any rate, the man-of-war is safe from the pirates, who prey only on unarmed merchantmen. Hope the sealed orders were to go after the privateers—that is, pirates."

The conversation was interrupted by the sound of the dinner gong, and passengers began to troop down from the deck to the dining saloon. Seasickness had not yet come on to take away their appetites.

The earl, who had been a silent, though interested, listener to the story of the old skipper, and who had his own private opinion of young Roland Bayard's position in the pirate ship, arose and drew the arm of Rosemary within his own, to take her down to dinner.

Old Capt. Grandiere offered his to Mrs. Force. Mr. Force took his eldest daughter, and Wynnette made a manly bow and took Elva under her protection.

And so they went down to their first dinner on the *Asia,* and their last for several days, for a more stormy passage than that of the *Asia* which sailed on that March morning was never weathered by ocean steamer.

After dinner the old skipper went on deck to smoke his pipe alone.

The Forces went down into the ladies' cabin, to look at their staterooms, arrange their effects, and get comfortably settled in their quarters before seasickness should overtake and disable them.

Our party occupied three staterooms in a row, on the

right-hand side of the cabin as you entered it from the forward gangway.

Nearest the gangway was the stateroom of Mr. and Mrs. Force; next to that the one of Odalite and Elva; and last of the three was that of Rosemary and Wynnette.

All the three rooms were exactly alike, and each had a door opening into the cabin, and opposite the door a little window looking out on the sea and sky. On the left hand as you entered there was a wide berth at the bottom and a narrow one at the top. On the right hand was the wide sofa. Under the lower berth and under the sofa were deep drawers to hold the sea wardrobe and other effects of the passengers. In the angle between the side of the window and the end of the sofa was a stationary washstand, with all needful accessories. In the angle between the other end of the sofa and the door leading into the cabin was a stationary lamp, locked up in a heavy plate glass box, and carefully lighted and locked up every night, and unlocked and extinguished every morning, by the stateroom steward. The little door of this glass box or closet was in the general cabin, so that the lamp could be attended without intrusion into the stateroom. For the rest, all the fittings of the staterooms were "cabinet finished"; the floor was covered with a thick crimson Brussels carpet; the berths and the windows curtained by crimson satin damask, and the sofa covered with crimson moreen. Under the stationary lamp was a corner bracket of black walnut, with three shelves to hold books, or anything else that could be contained on the limited space.

Below the Forces' quarters was a long row of staterooms exactly like their own, and on the opposite side of the cabin a corresponding row, all occupied by ladies and families who were total strangers to the Forces, and perhaps, in many cases, to each other also.

The ladies' cabin was fitted up very much as most well-appointed steamer cabins are, with handsome carpet, sofas, easy chairs, mirrors, water coolers, and so forth. Down the middle stood a long oval table, at which you could sit and read, or write, or sew, or talk with companions. This table was lighted at night by three large chandeliers hanging from the ceiling.

The Forces were well pleased with their quarters. And as for the girls, they were always running in and out of each other's rooms, comparing and admiring.

Only Mrs. Force was anxious about the comfort of her invalid brother. His stateroom was in the gentlemen's cabin. She would hear when they should meet at tea whether he were well accommodated.

They had scarcely completed their arrangements when the gong sounded to call the passengers to tea.

They went up to the saloon, where they were joined by the earl and the old skipper. Their party of eight just filled one table, which they thenceforth kept for themselves.

The old skipper was installed at the head of the table and the squire at the foot. Mrs. Force and the earl sat on the right and left of the skipper. This arrangement of the four elders was maintained for the whole of the voyage, but the four young people sat as they pleased.

This table had two waiters, and they were well attended.

In answer to Mrs. Force's questions the earl gave her a good account of his stateroom, adding it was near that of the captain.

After this the whole party went up on deck for a promenade. The setting sun was striking a broad path of glorious light across from the western horizon to the bows of the ship.

"It seems the course of our voyage," said Odalite.

"We are sailing toward the setting sun, and just now in its path of flame."

There were many more people on the forward deck; but after the sun had dropped below the horizon the wind gradually freshened and it grew very cold.

Then Mr. Force proposed that they should leave the deck.

They all went down to the saloon and gathered around one of the vacant tables, where the captain entertained them with sea yarns, and even sang a sea song.

There were many other groups of passengers gathered at the other tables, but they were still strangers to our party, when the old skipper began to sing his song with its roaring refrain of:

"Oh! what a row! what a rumpus! and a rioting!
They all endure, you may be sure,
Who—go—to—sea!"

Conversation stopped at all the tables, and all the people turned to listen.

Presently several joined in the chorus and made the saloon ring again with melody.

At the close of the song the singer was loudly applauded; but he excused himself from repeating the experiment.

At ten o'clock supper was served for those who wished it; but as our party were not among that number they left the saloon and retired to their berths, where they were all soon rocked asleep by the motion of the ship.

And so ended their first day out.

CHAPTER IX

"THE SEA KING'S DAUGHTER"

THE next day the passengers all arose early to go on deck; but most of them had to lie down again before they had finished dressing; and to remain in their staterooms, where they were attended by the stewardess.

The ship was aprpoaching Queenstown.

All our party, however, came upon deck. Some of them were sick enough, but they all thought that the fine air of the upper deck was better for them than the close air of the staterooms, or even of the cabin.

The weather-beaten and weather-proof old skipper and his grandniece, little Rosemary Hedge, were the only ones who remained perfectly well, with a keen appetite for breakfast and a wholesome enjoyment of the sharp March morning.

"How is it with you, my girl?" inquired the skipper, when they all met in the bows and exchanged their morning greetings and compared notes about endured or threatened sickness. "How is it with you? You look as fresh and as bright as a brand new sixpence, and you are as steady on your pins as if you had been to sea all your life!"

"She has been to sea longer than that!" put in Wynnette, the incorrigible. "She is only seventeen years old, but she has been to sea about two hundred years to my certain knowledge! And how many thousand years before that I don't know! And if she has not exactly followed the sea, in her own person, she has in that of her ancestry, on both sides of the house. Her father was a sailor, her two grandfathers were sailors, and her four great-grandfathers. And from them she has inherited her good sea legs."

"No—doubt—of—it. No—doubt—of—it," slowly and approvingly replied the old skipper, as he gazed admiringly on his little niece. "Ah! if she had only been a boy, what a sailor I could have made of her!"

They were drawing very near to Queenstown now, and in less than half an hour the *Asia* dropped anchor in the Cove of Cork.

As soon as the ship was still the seasick got well and went down to breakfast.

After that they returned to the deck, to look out upon the coast of Ireland.

As the *Asia* was to wait there for some hours to get the last mail, many of the passengers went on shore. Our party remained on the steamer.

In the afternoon the excursionists returned. The ship made preparations for sailing.

Our party sitting on deck, and all feeling perfectly well now that the ship was still, overheard some "grewsome" words from one of the men.

"That bank of clouds in the west means mischief and dirty weather ahead."

"Do you hear that, Jack Tar?" inquired the old skipper of his little niece.

"Yes, Uncle Gideon," she answered, lifting her large, blue eyes to his face.

"And do you know what 'dirty weather ahead' means?"

"Yes, Uncle Gideon."

"Well, what does it mean?"

"Why, it means furious storms to come."

"Did you ever hear the phrase before?"

"No, Uncle Gideon."

"Then how do you know what it means?"

"I don't know; but the meaning seems plain enough."

"Oh! then I must tell you how you know. By instinct. By inheritance. Just as the blind kitten knows

a dog the instant it scents his approach. I should think you would know not only what dirty weather means, but also the signs of its coming."

"Even I, who am neither a sailor nor the son of a sailor, can tell the signs of its presence," said Wynnette. "They are a ship deluged with rain and dilapidated by wind, slopped all over by waves, and holding several hundred human wretches, all deadly sick at their stomachs. If that is not dirty weather, I don't know the meaning of words."

"And that is just such weather, Miss Wynnette, as we shall be likely to have, more or less, for the next ten days, or longer. And the officers and men know it and are preparing for it. But never you mind, little Jack Tar. We shall not go down. And as for the rest, you can stand the storm. You're a natural born sailor!"

As the old skipper spoke the signal gun was fired, and the *Asia* steamed out of the cove.

The sun had now set behind a heavy bank of clouds. The wind had risen with more force than on the preceding evening, and blew so freshly that all the passengers, with the exception of a few weather-beaten men and well-seasoned voyagers, went below.

All our party, with the exception of the old skipper and his little niece Rosemary, not only went down, but turned in to be looked after by the hard-worked stewardess, or not unfrequently by one of the stewards.

"You don't want to go below to the stifling cabins, do you, now, little Jack Tar?" inquired Capt. Grandiere of his small companion.

"No, Uncle Gideon, I do not, indeed. I should much rather stay up here with you as long as I may," replied the child.

"Thought so! And so you may. Ah! if Heaven had given me such a boy!"

"But, Uncle Gideon, although I can walk the deck

when the ship is rolling, without falling or turning sick, I know I should not make a good sailor boy," said Rosemary.

"Why not, pray? I say you would make a splendid sailor boy! Why, every one of the passengers has gone down and turned in as sick as dogs, and here you are as well as I am!"

"But I couldn't be a sailor boy, because——"

"Because what?"

"Because I should be afraid to climb the ropes and things so high. I should be afraid of falling on the deck and killing myself, or falling into the sea and getting drowned," pleaded Rosemary.

"Now, don't go to tell me that you have inherited your sailor forefathers' sea heads and sea legs without their stout hearts! Don't go to tell me that!" said the skipper, taking his pipe from his mouth and staring down at his little companion.

The quaint little creature looked so ashamed of herself that the old man took pity on her, and said:

"Ah, well! you are nothing but a bit of a girl, after all, and the very tiniest mite of a girl, for seventeen years of age, that I ever saw in my life! Well, you shan't be a sailor and work on board ship! You shall be a dainty little lady in your own house:

" 'With servants to attend you
When you go up or down.'

Come, now! tell you old uncle a secret: Isn't my lord sweet on you?"

And the old sailor took his pipe from his mouth and poked the stem of it into her side.

" 'Sweet on me?' " echoed Rosemary, in perplexity.

"In love with you, then. Every girl knows what that means as soon as she knows her right hand from her left,

or sooner. Tell me the truth, now—isn't the earl in love with you?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Rosemary, in all sincerity; for although she knew that Lord Enderby had proposed to marry her, it never occurred to her to think of his being "in love" with her, or anybody else, because she considered him so much too old for her—old enough to be her father, as in truth he was.

"Well, then I don't know the weather signs in that latitude! That's all. His eyes are never off you, child. If he has not told you he loves you, he will do so soon. You must then refer him to me. I am the head of the family, and in the lack of your father, must stand in his shoes. You are very young to marry, Rosemary—only just seventeen. And I should accept his lordship's offer only with the understanding that he should wait for you a year; but then I should accept him, my girl; for it is not often that an English earl offers marriage to the daughter of a merchant captain, even though she is a little beauty and does come of a good family. And Enderby is a good sort. That is better than being an earl. He is a good sort."

Here the old man put his pipe in his mouth and smoked on in silence for some minutes, during which Rosemary sat by his side in dumb distress.

At last the skipper took out his pipe, blew off a cloud of smoke that went floating over the sea, and then he said:

"So you understand, my dear, that I, the head of your family, entirely approve the suit of Lord Enderby."

Rosemary was ready to cry.

"But, Uncle Gideon, I don't want to marry the earl! I like him so very much! I love him—I love him dearly! He is the best man I ever saw in my life! And I do love him dearly, dearly; but I couldn't marry him, and I wouldn't marry him for the whole wide world!" ex-

claimed Rosemary, with her little face and frame all quivering with her earnestness.

"Well—upon—my—word!" muttered the old skipper, laying down his pipe for good and all, and staring at his little niece, but to no purpose, for they were sitting in deep shadow now, and he could not see her face.

"You love the earl dearly, and would not marry him for the world! That is crazy talk. What do you mean by it?"

"Why, one does not want to marry people because one loves people. I love you and Uncle Force, and Cousin Le, and Sam and Ned, and ever so many more; but I would not marry any of you for all the world, even if I could. And I love Lord Enderby more than I do all the others, but I would not marry him. I would die first!"

"Then, I know what is the matter. The secret is out! You love some one else even better than you do the earl! Is not that so? I am the head of the family, Rosemary, and I have a right to know."

"Uncle," whispered the little creature, in a tremulous voice, as she clasped her tiny hands over her heart, speaking frankly under the friendly cover of the darkness—"uncle, I am not free to marry the earl, even if I wished to do so, which, indeed, I do not. I am engaged to Roland Bayard!"

"Good Lord bless my soul alive!" exclaimed the old man. "Since when, if you please?"

"Oh, I don't know, Uncle Gideon; but I have been engaged to Roland for years and years and years."

"Bless my soul and body!"

"It is a sacred bond, and I wouldn't break it even if I could."

"Ah! the love that grew from childhood—was that it, Rosemary?"

"Yes, dear Uncle Gideon."

"Well, he's a good sort, too—is Bayard."

As the old skipper spoke, one of the stewards came on deck with a message from Mrs. Force.

"Would Capt. Grandiere be so good as to send Miss Hedge down to the ladies' cabin, as it was too late and too cold for her to remain on deck?"

"I will take you down myself," said the old man.

And he escorted the girl to the door of her stateroom, and bade her good-night.

Rosemary was soon asleep in the upper berth of the room she shared with Wynnette.

But the old skipper spent hours on deck before he turned in.

CHAPTER X

THE PRIVATEER "ARGENTE"

WHAT a night!

The wind rose to a hurricane! It had a thousand voices! It hummed, sang, whistled and hurrahed, as it danced in the rigging. It moaned, wailed, howled and shrieked, as it knocked the ship about. The steamer rocked, tossed and tumbled in the stormy sea; now rising high upon a heaving wave, now dropping into the gulch of the sea.

Passengers could not sleep that night. It was as much as they could do to hold on and keep their places in bed. Those on the upper berths were in danger of serious falls.

Rosemary, who shared Wynnette's stateroom, and slept in the upper berth, let herself down by a series of difficult but successful gymnastics, and lay upon the sofa, trembling. Presently she crept to the door, opened it a little way, and peeped into the cabin. The place was quiet, the doors of the other staterooms all closed,

and no one present but the local night watchman, sitting composedly by the single light.

She closed the door, crept back to the sofa and lay down again. Presently she said:

"Wynnette! how can you sleep through this?"

"Sleep!" cried Wynnette. "Who's asleep? Not I! Who could sleep through such a demoniac opera as this? Rosemary! the Germans swear 'Ten thousand devils!'—in their own language—and I think the whole ten thousand German devils must be holding an open-air concert, after the manner of their musical countrymen, and that right around our ship! Only, they are all roaring drunk, and every one singing and playing and piping and blowing out of tune! I never heard such a hullabaloo in my life!"

"Oh, Wynnette, do you think there is any danger?"

"No, I don't. If there was, the passengers would all be out of their berths and dressed, to be ready for the lifeboats. And there would be a great running and racing, and pulling and hauling, and cursing and swearing on deck; and the officers would all be—blaming the men's eyes, and livers, and lights, to—encourage them, you know. And making a hullabaloo to be heard above the hurricane. And much more horrible than the hurricane, too. No; there can be no danger yet."

"But would all that profanity go on in a beautiful ocean steamer?" inquired Rosemary.

"A good deal of it would on occasion. You may bet your best boots on that."

"Oh, I wish it was morning!" sighed Rosemary.

"So do I. But 'if wishes were horses, beggars would ride,' you know."

Morning came at length, however, and as the sun arose the wind went down, but not entirely, for it still blew and often started up in gusts.

None of our party appeared at the breakfast table, or

even afterward on deck, except the old skipper and Rosemary.

The day passed wearily.

At intervals Capt. Grandiere visited the earl in his stateroom, and Rosemary her friends in their own. Both visitors found the sick ones cross and sulky, and so indisposed to be friendly and social that they were speedily left to themselves.

People are no more responsible for their behavior when they are seasick than if they were lunatics.

At night all hands turned in early. And the wind rose and blew a hurricane all night.

And as the day had passed, so the week passed.

Sunday came. As the weather continued to be tempestuous, the passengers remained seasick.

No one came up on deck except the old skipper and his grandniece. The old man was dressed in his Sunday clothes, and carried a Bible, a prayer book and a hymn book in his hand. He drew his little companion away to a comparatively sheltered part of the deck, and they sat down to read the service for the day—the old man reading the minister's part from the book and the young girl making the responses from memory. Then he read the lessons for the day; and finally they sang a hymn.

At dinner time they went to the saloon, but found it almost deserted.

The ensuing week proved quite as tempestuous as the one just passed.

They were, in fact, suffering from a series of equinoctial storms.

When the ship reached the Banks of Newfoundland they experienced some variety of weather in the shape of blinding snow and stinging sleet, added to howling winds and leaping waves.

None but the officers and crew of the steamer and our old skipper ventured on deck.

Even Rosemary stayed below. It is hard enough to keep one's feet on a rolling deck when it is dry, or on an icy surface when it is still; but to stand or walk on the sleety boards of a rocking ship is well-nigh impossible to any one but a seasoned old salt.

So Rosemary, as well as her companions, kept the cabin or the saloon.

To as many as were able to appear on the common ground of the last-mentioned place the old man made himself very useful and agreeable in helping them to pass away the long days, and especially the long evenings. He told stories, sang songs, and recited poetry—miles of poetry, which he said he had committed to memory in the lone watches of his half century of sea life.

All this time the steamer was not "flying," not even "running," but, as it were, only tumbling against wind and weather toward the port of New York.

But it happened on one fine morning, when the winds and the waves fell and the sun shone brightly and warmly, and seasick passengers got well and came out on deck like hibernating animals in the spring—they spied a pilot boat—Number 15—coming toward them.

There was a general jubilee! They were not yet in sight of land, but they could not be far from port, for the pilot boat was coming!

Half an hour later the pilot boat was alongside and the pilot on deck, with a batch of the latest New York and Washington papers, and with news—such news!

A crowd gathered around him at once.

His papers were taken right and left, and all the men turned eagerly to the first columns of the first page of his own particular sheet to read:

"Latest Dispatches from the Seat of War."

Before every man's face fluttered the open newspapers like spread sails, while they devoured the news!

But the pilot's oral news, which was so very fresh that it had not had time to get into the morning papers, was more interesting to our immediate party than all the rest.

Mr. Force, who was deep in news from the peninsula, caught the words:

"Lieut. Com. Force."

And he looked up.

The pilot was hastily and excitedly recounting some adventure to a group of men gathered around him to listen. Among these was the old skipper Grandiere, who seemed eagerly interested.

The pilot spoke hurriedly, for he had presently to take command of the ship to carry her into port.

Mr. Force dropped his paper and joined the group.

"What is it?" he inquired of Gideon Grandiere.

But the old man was too intent upon the words of the pilot to hear any others.

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Force again.

Then the pilot stopped to answer him.

"The blockade runner *Argente,* Capt. Silver, sir! Taken off the coast of South Carolina, by the United States ship *Eagle,* Capt. Warfield. Silver and his first officer, and all his crew who were not killed in the fight, taken prisoners and put in irons. The *Eagle* put a part of its own crew on board the *Argente,* under command of Lieut. Force, who brought the prize safely into port this morning, with Silver and his first officer in irons."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Capt. Grandiere. "But do you call her a blockade runner only? She's an infernal pirate! She took my *Kitty!* And Silver shall hang for it!"

"And the *Argente* is now in New York harbor?" inquired Mr. Force.

"No, sir. She was telegraphed from the navy department to sail at once for Washington. And she sailed an hour ago."

CHAPTER XI

WHERE IS ROLAND?

"WHERE is Roland? Oh, Mrs. Force, where is Roland? He was on the pirate ship, you know! Oh, was he wounded in the sea fight? Was he taken prisoner? Was he killed? Oh, was he killed?" breathed little Rosemary Hedge, pulling at the lady's dress and lifting her light blue eyes beseechingly to the lady's face.

"Let us hope that he has been rescued, my dear, and brought home in honor, since you know he was himself a captive among the pirates," replied Elfrida Force, whose face looked quite as pale and anxious as the distressed little face turned up to hers.

"But—but—does not the pilot know? Can he not tell us? Will not some one ask him?"

"I think he has told all he knows, my dear! Remember the *Argente* was only in port a few hours this morning, after the morning papers were out, and before the afternoon papers were out. The pilot put to sea at once. He could not have got but an outline of the facts, and perhaps not even a true outline."

"Oh, Uncle Gideon!" pleaded Rosemary, leaving the side of Mrs. Force and joining the old skipper. "Oh, Uncle Gideon, won't you please ask the pilot if he heard of any prisoner among the pirate crew, rescued from them by the *Eagle,* or if he heard anything at all of Roland Bayard?"

"Yes, yes, child, I will ask him," promptly replied Capt. Grandiere, pushing to the front of the group, and

hailing the pilot, who was elbowing his way through the questioners who would have detained him longer.

"Ahoy, shipmate! Not so fast! Answer one question, and then you may go."

"Well, what is it?" demanded the pilot.

"Heard you of any honest prisoner rescued from the pirates?"

"No."

"Heard you of any man of Roland Bayard?"

"No! never heard that name before! There were but two names talked of—Nichol Silver, the captain of the blockade runner, and Craven Cloud, his first officer," said the pilot, now breaking away and hurrying aft.

"And they'll both be hung as high as Haman, or my name is not Grandiere, and I never commanded the good ship *Kitty,* and she was never taken from me, with all her cargo, by the piratical craft *Argente,* devil sink her! Blockade runner, is it? No doubt in the world she was a blockade runner! But she was so much worse than that that she was a pirate of the worst order! Attacking and taking unarmed merchantmen, and committing Lord knows what atrocities besides! Ah! I'm glad —I'm glad I didn't stop longer in England! I'm glad I came over, so as to be able to give evidence that will hang the pirate captain and his mate! I shall take the first train to Washington, after landing! I must be on hand to give my evidence as soon as possible, or those devils will be claiming to be treated as prisoners of war, because they were taken while trying to run the blockade! Prisoners of war, indeed, after taking my peaceable *Kitty,* with her cargo, and sending her crew adrift! We'll see when I get to Washington! My evidence will hang them as high as Haman!"

"Don't you think a fifteen-foot gallows and a five-foot fall would be quite as effectual, Capt. Grandiere?" inquired Wynnette.

"What do you know about it?" demanded the skipper.

"Nothing at all! That is the very reason why I was turning the question over in my mind and asking for instructions."

"Oh, Mr. Force! Oh, Mr. Force! What has become of Roland?" pleaded Rosemary, in a low, wailing voice as she took the squire's hand.

"I wish I could satisfy you, my dear, but I cannot. We may learn something from the evening papers when we land in New York. If we do not we shall certainly find out when we reach Washington, where we shall meet Le."

"Oh, how soon shall we go to Washington?"

"By the first train after we land. Of course, you know, we did expect to spend a few days in New York, but this news has altered all our plans, and we shall go on immediately to Washington."

"To-morrow? Early to-morrow?"

"No, to-night! So that we may be in the city to-morrow morning!"

"Then," said the quaint little being, "I must bear the suspense as well as I can and trust in the Lord."

"And, in the meantime, remember, my dear, as your uncle said, we have every reason to hope and expect that Roland is safe on board the *Argente*. Being already a prisoner on board the blockade runner, he could not have been in the sea fight, and, therefore, he could have been neither killed nor wounded. If taken prisoner by the *Eagle*, among the rest, he must soon have told the story of his capture, and he must have been recognized by his friend Le, and released and brought home in honor."

"Yes," said Rosemary, in her grave, demure way, "I think that is very probable."

"And we are going to Washington to find both our lads, Le and Roland."

"Oh! Lord grant it!" fervently exclaimed Rosemary, clasping her tiny hands and lifting her light blue eyes.

Mr. Force turned to look at his daughter Odalite.

What a change had come over the pale, grave face of the girl. Her cheeks and her lips were glowing with fire, her dark eyes were sparkling with light.

"What do you think of all this, my dear?" he inquired.

"Oh, father! I feel so happy! so happy! Le has distinguished himself! Le is the hero of the day! Thank Heaven! Oh, thank Heaven! We shall see Le in a few hours from this! See Le safe, well and honored! Thank Heaven! Oh, thank Heaven!"

Mr. Force looked at his wife. Her face was very pale and troubled.

"My dear Elfrida," he said, "you let your sympathy for little Rosemary Hedge and her lover affect you without cause. I think there is no doubt the young man is now quite safe on board the *Argente,* on her way to the Washington Navy Yard. We shall land at New York about sunset. We shall leave our effects at the custom house and take the night express for the South. We shall reach Washington before the *Argente* gets there; but we shall wait for her, and as soon as she arrives we shall find both the boys safe—Leonidas and Roland—safe."

"You are very, very good," she replied, in a low tone.

"There is the gong for dinner. I have an appetite for the first time in ten days," he said, gayly, as he drew his wife's arm within his own to take her down.

At all the tables in the dining saloon nothing was discussed but the war news. Gen. Grant was slowly fighting his way on to Richmond, opposed by an army that was daily wasting away under toil, fever and privation, but who made up for want of numbers with indomitable courage, endurance and self-devotion.

After dinner the passengers all went up on deck to watch for the first glimpse of land.

Many had glasses, through which they looked long and wistfully to the westward, and then passed their instruments on from hand to hand among the less fortunate passengers who had none of their own.

Often they mistook a cloud lying low on the horizon for a line of coast.

Presently some one staring through the glass cried out:

"Land!"

"Nothing but a low cloud!" cried another man, staring through another glass.

"The Highlands!" cried the first speaker.

And in a very few minutes "The Highlands!" was the verdict of all on the outlook.

The progress of the ship was now very rapid.

She soon passed the Narrows, and stopped.

The quarantine officers came on board. No ship ever came into the harbor with crew and passengers in a healthier condition, Mr. Force's chronic rheumatism being the only case of indisposition on board. So the *Asia* was allowed to go on her way, and reached her pier a little after sunset.

Mr. Force at once landed with his party, taking only such luggage as they had used during the voyage, and which could be carried in the hands of the servants.

This was duly examined and passed by the custom house officers; the bulk of their luggage to be afterward brought on by the groom of Lord Enderby, who was left in charge.

There was a train for Washington at nine o'clock. It was now seven.

They had time to go to a hotel and take tea.

They had scarcely left the custom house officers before

they were assailed by a swarm of newsboys crying their papers.

"Eve-en-ing——" this, that, or the other.

"Latest from the Perningsalar!"

"Capture of the blockade runner *Argente* by United States ship *Eagle!*" etc., etc.

"Hi! Boy! Let us have a paper!" called Mr. Force, as they were swarming past him to a large group of men who were also just off the steamer, famishing for news and calling for venders.

Two or three turned back.

Mr. Force and the earl bought papers from all of them.

At this moment the negro valet who had been sent for carriages came up with two.

The papers were distributed to the members of the party and they entered the carriages, the four girls in the front carriage, and the four elders in the hind one—and read as they drove along.

But, in fact, they learned nothing more from the papers than they had learned from the pilot, except that there were more details of the fight which ended in the capture of the privateer by the man-of-war.

This word "privateer" always put the old skipper into a rage.

"Privateer!" he exclaimed. "They might as well call an assassin a mere sneak thief. She is a pirate of the most devilish description. She took my unarmed *Kitty*. She seized her cargo. She sent her crew adrift in open boats in midocean. And I'll hang all hands for it. I swear it!"

"I don't think you could hang a whole ship's crew," laughed Lord Enderby.

"Well, may I be blowed from a cannon's mouth myself if I don't hang the head devil and his mate! That's

what I'm going to Washington for—to make my charge."

In good time they reached their hotel, took their tea, and sat down to rest and read the papers at their leisure before starting on their night journey.

Here a little surprise met the whole party. When Mr. Force tendered a ten-dollar goldpiece in payment of his bill at the counter of the office, the coin was rung suspiciously on the board, then examined critically, and finally dropped into the till. And he was handed a ten-dollar greenback and a two-dollar greenback in exchange, with the information that he would find it all right, as gold was that day at one hundred and twenty per cent. premium.

This information so astonished the simple squire that he did not recover himself until he had reached the railway station at Jersey City.

The party arrived in full time to purchase their tickets and take their seats.

CHAPTER XII

ON TO WASHINGTON

"EVERYBODY is happy but me! Oh, Uncle Gideon, I have looked all over, up and down, and everywhere in the papers, and I cannot see one word about Roland! Oh, Roland! Roland!" moaned little Rosemary, as she sat on the seat beside the old skipper in the crowded car.

"My poor little girl, such a small item as the rescue of a single prisoner from the pirate ship would scarcely be noticed in a first hurried account of the capture by the *Eagle*. Have patience, my dear little one. In a few hours we shall hear from Le himself whether Roland is with him. And remember, my girl, that you are going

to meet your dear mother and aunt, and all your near relations, whom you have not seen for so many years, and who are counting the hours until you come to them. Think of your own kindred, my child."

"Oh! I do, I do! And I do love my dear mother and dear aunt, dearly, dearly! But they are both safe and well, and so I am not anxious about them. But, oh! Roland! Roland!" she wailed, in a little, low tone.

Mrs. Force, who sat beside her husband immediately in front of Rosemary and her uncle, heard the little, low moan, and turning to the squire, said.

"Abel, dear, will you change seats with little Rosemary, and let the child sit with me for a while?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Force, and the change was effected at once.

Mrs. Force put one arm around Rosemary's waist, and drew her in a close embrace, as she whispered:

"You must pray, and hope, and trust, my dear. We have no reason to fear that any evil has happened to Roland."

"Oh, ma'am, I am praying all the time, in my heart, for Roland," sighed the girl.

"Well, darling, when you pray, you must trust."

"Oh, I do try to! I do try to! But this dreadful uncertainty! Oh! just look how happy Odalite and the other girls are! But Odalite—every time she turns her head around her face flashes! She is so delighted! Oh! I hope I am not envious, but I do wish I felt as sure of seeing Roland safe and well as you all are of seeing Leonidas great and happy!"

Mrs. Force smiled, pensively, at the exaggerated words of the poor little girl, but she did not attempt to criticize them.

It was now nearly ten o'clock, and in spite of excitement and anxiety the travelers yielded to a sense of fatigue and drowsiness, ceased to talk, and began to doze.

There was no sleeping car on that train, or if there was, the party had not engaged berths, so they sat in uneasy attitudes, and dropped off, one by one, into slumber, that was only disturbed by the stopping of the train at the stations, and quickly resumed when the train was again in motion.

They woke up thoroughly when they reached Philadelphia, where several more cars were attached to the train, and a number of troops got on to go to Washington, en route to reinforce Gen. Grant's army. Many of these soldiers could not find seats, though the train was a long one, and they had to stand in a line down the middle of the cars.

This made the air stifling, oppressive and stupefying.

Our party dropped off into a deep, unwholesome sleep, which lasted until the train reached Baltimore, when they one and all awoke with a sense of sickness and semi-suffocation.

But here people got in and people got out, doors were opened at each end, and a draught of purifying air went through and revived the sufferers.

Here still more cars were attached to the train, and more troops got on, and the crowd was even closer than before.

Again our victims succumbed to the stupefying effects of the confined air, and slept heavily and unhealthily until they reached Washington.

Day had dawned when the train crawled into the depot.

The closely packed multitude got out, and filled all the space that was under cover.

Mr. Force piloted his party through the crowd, and out into the open air.

"I doubt if we can get a carriage," said the squire, looking around.

And his doubts were speedily and unpleasantly set at

rest. He could not. If there had been any on the spot they had been seized by the first travelers, who had jumped off the train to secure a ride.

"There is nothing for it but to walk to our hotel. Luckily, it is not very far off," said Mr. Force.

It was a fine morning, and dawn was reddening in the east as they left the depot and walked on toward Pennsylvania Avenue. They walked somewhat stiffly at first, from having been cramped up so long in the railway train, but the fresh air was reviving, and so they all felt more invigorated at every yard by their progress.

They reached the hotel with fine appetites for breakfast.

Mr. Force found, on inquiring at the office, that the house was full; there was not a room or a bed to spare; but the house could give them breakfast.

So they waited in the public parlor until the breakfast hour came, when they went down into the saloon and took their morning meal.

After breakfast Mr. Force went into the reading room to inquire about the *Argente* and to look at the morning papers.

The rest of his party waited for him at the foot of the stairs leading to the parlor.

At last he came and said:

"The *Argente* has not yet reached the navy yard, nor has she been heard from since leaving New York yesterday morning, but she is expected to-day."

"And what are we to do next?" inquired Mrs. Force.

"You and the girls will remain here, in the ladies' parlor, and read the newspapers, or amuse yourselves in any way you please. Capt. Grandiere is going to see the secretary of the navy to report the capture of his clipper, the *Kitty,* by the *Argente.* Enderby will go out with me in search of lodgings. We must find some place to sleep in this over-crowded city. And we must get

out of it as soon as we can. As soon, that is, as the *Argente* business is settled and Leonidas gets his leave. We shall all return here in time for dinner."

With these words Mr. Force opened the door of the parlor and saw the ladies of his party in.

It was yet so early that the parlor was quite empty.

"I think you might venture to recline on some of these sofas and go to sleep," said the squire, as he nodded good-morning and left the room, accompanied by the earl and the skipper.

When they went down, left the hotel and stood upon the sidewalk, Mr. Force looked up and down the streets in search of that line of hacks which usually stands drawn up before every large hotel. But it was not to be seen.

Inquiry of the porters developed a startling fact—nearly all the horses in Washington had a plague called epizoötic. There were but few hacks in the public service now, and they were always "on the go." There were but few street cars running, because there were but few horses to draw them, and they were always overcrowded.

"Shall we walk, Enderby? Or shall we stand on the reeking platform of one of these passing cars?" Mr. Force inquired.

"Oh, walk, by all means, as long as we have a leg to stand on, in preference to adding three hundred pounds more to the burden of those poor beasts," promptly replied the earl.

"Fortunately, all the best hotels are on or near the avenue," observed the squire, as they turned westward.

"Now, doesn't it seem as if war were quite enough of evil without a plague among the horses, Enderby?" inquired Abel Force.

"You may thank Heaven that the plague is not among the humans," replied the earl.

"Here is the Metropolitan. We will try here," said the squire.

And they went in, but were not successful; the house was full.

So hotel after hotel was tried, but in vain. All were full. The two gentlemen walked on toward the west end of the avenue. There at length they found, in one of the largest and best hotels in the city, a suit of three rooms—two double-bedded chambers and one single one.

These were secured at once for their party of eight, and at a rather high price, too.

Then they went back to the place where they had left the ladies of the party.

The old skipper had already returned.

Mr. Force reported progress, and described the best apartments he had been able to find.

"You see there is scarcely space left for us in Washington. We must get back to old Maryland as fast as we can," added the squire.

Capt. Grandiere followed suit and told of his adventures. He had not been able to see the secretary at all. Anteroom full of lubbers who were seeking offices or other favors. He had to wait his turn, and before his turn came a fellow opened an inner door and announced that the secretary could see no one else that day, and added that he had gone home. Then he—the skipper—had gone down to the navy yard to inquire about the *Argente,* and discovered that the prize had been signaled from Fortress Monroe and was expected to be at Washington Navy Yard the next day.

"And you shall see as fine a sight as you could wish when I am confronted with that devil to-morrow! He expects, by what we read, to be treated as a prisoner of war, and to be put on his parole and set free. He certainly doesn't expect to find me on hand to stop his little game and send him to prison to be tried for his

life, and in the end hung for piracy!" added the old skipper.

"Oh, if we could only hear from Roland!" sighed little Rosemary.

"Be patient, dear. We shall hear to-morrow," whispered Mrs. Force.

"Oh! 'To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow!'" sighed Rosemary.

"We will go down and get some luncheon, and then go on to our new quarters."

"And to-night we shall sleep in motionless beds for the first time in two weeks, thank Heaven!" exclaimed Wynnette.

They went down to the dining saloon and lunched. Then Mr. Force settled the bill and the whole party went out.

The squire caught a hack "on the fly," put his five ladies into it and gave the driver the address. The hack drove off.

The three gentlemen walked all the way to the hotel.

When they reached it and were gathered in the parlor some little discussion took place as to the division of three rooms among eight persons. And it was concluded that the four girls should have one of the double-bedded rooms; the earl and the captain should have the other; and Mr. and Mrs. Force should have the small one.

The party retired very early that night, and in spite of anticipations of the morning they all slept profoundly.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAPTAIN OF THE "ARGENTE"

Our travelers arose very early the next morning.

The very first news that met Mr. Force on his en-

trance into the gentlemen's reading room was, that the *Argente* was in the navy yard. She had arrived at dawn that morning.

The squire hastened to the ladies' parlor to communicate the news to Mrs. Force and the girls.

There was a general exclamation of joy, and then a cry of sharp anxiety from Rosemary:

"Oh! when shall we find out about Roland?" she pleaded.

"This very morning, dear child! No more to-morrows! To-morrow has come!" replied Mrs. Force, with a smile—yet, oh! how wan a smile!

"Come down to breakfast at once. We will get a cup of coffee or something, and then start for the navy yard and go on board the *Argente,*" said the squire, giving his arm to his wife.

They went down to the saloon and breakfasted as well as they could for the excitement, which took away their appetite.

After that, Mr. Force went out to hunt up a carriage, for there was none on the stand. When he returned, he said:

"My children, I could only get one hack, and it will hold but four persons inside. Your Uncle Enderby does not wish to go out. Therefore, Wynnette and Elva, you will remain here under the protection of your uncle, until we come back. Your mother, your sister, and your little friend will go with me."

"But where is Uncle Gideon?" inquired Rosemary.

"My child, chains would not have held him here. He has gone down in an omnibus to the navy yard."

Preparations were soon made, and Mr. Force and the three ladies were on their way to the east end of the city.

They drove through the navy yard gate, past the offi-

cers' quarters and the workshops, and down to the water side.

There lay the *Argente* at anchor a few hundred yards from the shore.

Mr. Force directed the driver to draw up.

Then he alighted from the carriage and handed his wife down; Odalite and Rosemary sprang out unassisted.

Odalite's face was bright, eager, expectant; Rosemary's pale, timid and anxious; both stood looking out upon the prize.

"How shall we reach the ship?" inquired Mrs. Force.

"I must signal for a boat to come off and fetch us! Stay, there is a boat coming," announced the squire, and soon they all saw the boat that had been partly hidden in the shadow of the ship's hulk, put off from her side. It was rowed by six sailors and approached the shore rapidly.

"Who is in it? Oh, if it should be Roland!" aspirated Rosemary, in a low, deep tone.

"Who is it, Abel?" inquired Mrs. Force of her husband, who was looking through a field glass.

"There is but one man besides the oarsmen, and his back is toward us. I do not know who he is; but—he is neither Leonidas nor Roland! He is much too stout for either of our boys! He is as broad-backed as old Gideon Grandiere!"

"By the way, where is Capt. Grandiere? You said he had come down to the yard; but we have not seen him."

"My dear, he was a full half hour in advance of us, and must be on board the *Argente,* giving the officers and crew the benefit of his views on piracy! Come, the boat is almost here!"

A few minutes after the boat landed, the sailors drew in their oars and the single passenger turned around, got upon his feet, and stepped ashore.

He was the old skipper.

"Oh! Capt. Grandiere! What news?" exclaimed Mr. Force, while all his party looked the eager question which they did not put into words.

"No news at all! Nothing but a fresh disappointment and a longer suspense."

"What do you mean?" inquired Mrs. Force.

The old man took off his cap, drew his red bandanna from its crown, deliberately wiped his face and head, replaced the handkerchief in his cap and his cap upon his crown and answered:

"There's nobody aboard that can tell me anything, or that will tell anything if they can."

"And did you learn nothing?"

"Nothing but this: that Lieut. Force has gone to make his report at headquarters, and nobody knows when he will be back. And the pirate and his mate are gone before the commissioner of prisoners, and nobody knows what their fate is to be."

"And did you hear nothing—nothing at all of Roland?" inquired Rosemary, in a faint voice.

"Nothing whatever, my girl! I did inquire, but no one knew anything of any young man of that name. I am very sorry, my poor child."

Rosemary had grown very pale and looked as if she were about to faint.

The old skipper raised her in his arms and laid her in the carriage, where she sank back upon the cushions.

Mrs. Force got in, seated herself beside Rosemary and drew the suffering girl to her bosom.

"Have courage, my love," she whispered, through her tears—"have courage. Roland may have made his escape from the *Argente* before she was captured by the *Eagle;* or he may be, by a mistake, with the other prisoners on board a man-of-war. Have courage, dear love."

"Oh, Mrs. Force, I cannot—I cannot any longer! I feel as if I should give up and die!" moaned the girl.

Mr. Force handed Odalite into the carriage, and then, turning to the old skipper, said:

"Capt. Grandiere, if you will get in with the ladies, I will take a seat with the driver, and we will all go on together."

"I will take the seat by the driver, and thank you, if you will allow me; but I cannot be shut up in the inside of that hack; I would rather walk," replied the old sailor.

"As you please," said Mr. Force; and he helped the skipper to mount the box, and then entered the carriage and seated himself with his "womenkind."

"Where to, sir?" inquired the driver.

"To the office of the commissioner of prisoners; and on your way call at the hotel where you took us up."

"Yes, sir."

The carriage drove off, passed through the navy yard gate again, and took its way up Garrison Street to Pennsylvania Avenue, and thence to the West End.

Half an hour's rapid drive brought the party to the front of their hotel.

"My dear," said the squire to his wife, "I cannot take you and these girls to the commissioner's office. I will take you upstairs, and ask your brother if he would like to accompany me."

"Very well, Abel," replied the lady.

Mr. Force got out, handed down his wife and the young ladies, and escorted them into the hotel.

They found the earl and his two nieces in the parlor. The two girls started up with the question:

"What news?"

"No very definite news," replied their father; "but your mamma will tell you all we have learned. I am going to the office of the commissioner of prisoners, to see if I can meet Le. If I can, I will wait until he is at leisure, and bring him here. Enderby, would you like to go with me and see what it is?"

"Very much," replied the earl.

And the two men went out together. They entered the carriage, which was driven off immediately.

It was but a short drive, and in less than ten minutes the carriage drew up, and the gentlemen alighted.

Capt. Grandiere climbed down from his seat, and the three entered the building together.

The place had once been a commodious dwelling house, but was now, like many others of the finest mansions in Washington, taken for the service of the government. A sentinel was on guard before the door. Mr. Force spoke a few words to him, and passed on with his party. He entered a front hall, and thence through a door on the right they passed into a large front room, furnished with seats all around its walls, and a long table at its back, with chairs behind it, and folios and stationery on its top. Two or three men in uniform sat behind this table, while all around the room, on the benches against the walls, sat a rough-looking score of men guarded by soldiers. There was another door on the right of the long table, and opening into a rear room. A sentinel or janitor stood at that door.

While they waited to be admitted to the presence of the commissioner, the door opened, and two prisoners came out, guarded by a detachment of soldiers.

"There he is! There is the head devil—and not in irons, either! And there—there, in his company—a prisoner, too, by all that is atrocious!—is my mate, Roland!"

The two gentlemen looked up, stared at the prisoners who were slowly crossing the room to the outer door, closely guarded by the soldiers—stared until the elder and stouter of the two lifted the back of his hand to his forehead in a mock salute, and smiled, while the younger fixed a gaze of yearning entreaty upon the face of his

old captain, and then turned the same gaze upon his old friend.

Yes! the pirate's first officer, taken, red-handed, with him, was Roland Bayard!

But who was the pirate himself?

CHAPTER XIV

WHO HE WAS

"You say this man is the captain of the *Argente?*" inquired Mr. Force of the old skipper, when the prisoners and their guard had passed out of the room.

"Yes! He is Silver—Silver, the pirate captain! No irons on his wrists yet! Prisoner of war, is he? Ah! ah! we shall see—we shall see! But my brave Roland! Taken with him! This, then was the blockade runner's first officer whom they were talking about, who was taken with him, and is now sent to prison with him! Oh, Roland! Roland! Is it possible that you yielded to temptations to join in a lawless life! But it will cost you your own life, Roland, my lad! No rescued prisoner from the pirate's clutch are you, Roland, but a comrade of pirates yourself! I thought I knew the boy! I thought I knew him for an honest lad! But I was mistaken in him! Oh, how mistaken I was!"

While the captain was muttering these lamentations to himself, Mr. Force was standing in a maze of perplexity—not thinking then so much of Roland as of the pirate captain.

The earl touched him on the shoulder and aroused him.

"I know the villain!" he said. "I have much cause to know him! His name is Stukely—Byrne Stukely—

once a lieutenant in the royal navy, but cashiered years ago for dishonorable conduct."

Mr. Force stared at the speaker, but did not reply.

"Why, Force! You look as if you knew the fellow also! You look as if you 'could a tale reveal.' What is it?"

"I know the man. But I know him as Angus Anglesea, Esq., of Anglewood Manor, late colonel in the East India Service."

"What, Force! That fellow! He is not Anglesea! He never was in the army in all his life. He was in the navy, and kicked out for disgracing it. Is he the man you have known to your grief as Anglesea?"

"He is."

"Then, Force, the mystery that puzzled me is solved. The inconsistency that distressed me is reconciled. I never could understand how you could accuse my friend Angus Anglesea, the Christian gentleman and renowned soldier, of the base and cowardly crimes committed by your persecutor! How could I associate theft, forgery and bigamy with such a character as that of Angus Anglesea? Though they are very consistent with the career of Byrne Stukely."

"Who is this man? And how is it that he could take the name and style of an officer and a gentleman, and deceive us all, even my wife, who had known Col. Anglesea in his youth?" demanded the squire.

The earl shrugged his shoulders and then replied:

"The fellow is a near relation of Anglesea, and bears a strong personal resemblance to him. In their youth and early manhood they were counterparts of each other; but as they have grown older they have diverged in appearance, so that now no one could mistake the one for the other. The reason is this—both boys inherited the same form, features and expression from the same remote ancestor; but they inherited different disposi-

tions, and have had different trainings. Each has grown old 'in the likeness of his love,' and so they have now grown apart. Angus Anglesea is of medium size, as well as of medium height; his features are clean cut, his complexion clear and pale; his expression grave, sweet, thoughtful, benevolent, intellectual. Stukely is, as you see, overgrown, with an obese form, bloated features, red face, and a brutal, sensual, and sometimes ferocious expression."

"Yes," replied Abel Force, "and the last three years of lawless life has made him even more brutal than ever."

"He was in his earlier life a protégé of Anglesea's. It was his influence that got him into the royal navy. But he is and has been for years a sharp thorn in the side of Angus, taking advantage of his personal resemblance to his cousin, using his knowledge of his relative's affairs and his skill in imitating his handwriting to swindle every one everywhere who came under his notice. This was the adventurer who tried to marry your daughter, Force. It is well the marriage was stopped at the altar, though the California woman, poor soul, had no right to interfere."

"Why?" demanded Abel Force.

"Because Stukely has a wife and five children living near Anglewood on the charity of Angus Anglesea."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Abel Force, earnestly. "There is now nothing to prevent the happiness of my dear Odalite and Leonidas."

"I don't know what you are both talking about, I am sure," complained the old skipper.

"No, you do not know our family history for the last six years, Capt. Grandiere, or the trouble we have suffered through that man of whom we have been speaking; but you shall know all at our earliest convenience."

"But Roland! Oh, Roland! What will become of my boy?" groaned the captain.

"Can you not prove that he was taken prisoner by the pirate?" demanded Mr. Force.

"Yes; but I cannot prove that he did not join the pirates, as Silver told me that he meant to do. And here he is under a false name—Craven Cloud, first officer to the pirate captain! It looks black! I wish I had never lived to see this day!" groaned the captain.

After they had waited about half an hour in the hope of seeing Le come out of the commissioner's office, Mr. Force went and spoke to the messenger at the door.

"Do you know whether Lieut. Force, who brought the prize ship with the prisoners this morning, is now with the commissioner?"

"No, sir; he is not. He came with the prisoners this morning and made his report, and left them, and then went up to the navy department," replied the man.

"Thank you! That will do! Come, Enderby! Come, Grandiere! We may as well return to the hotel! We shall not be likely to find Le! We must wait until he comes to us, I suppose! If he only knew what good news waits him he would hurry!"

"If he only knew that we were in the city, or where to find us! But he does not, you see," said the earl.

"Wait one moment," exclaimed the captain. "I must speak to that man before we go. Can you tell me where those two prisoners have been sent?"

"To the Old Capitol prison?" replied the messenger.

"Can I get to see them?"

"Only by a permit."

"Go on, Force! You and the earl! I am going to see my dear boy! Oh, Heaven! who shall tell poor Rosemary?"

CHAPTER XV

LEONIDAS

"WHAT do you think of this case of young Bayard?" inquired the earl, as the two gentlemen drove back to the hotel.

"I cannot think! I have never in my life felt so amazed, so confused, and so uncertain! The sudden meeting of Anglesea——"

"Stukely, my dear friend! Stukely!" interrupted the earl.

"Stukely, then! the man we have known as Anglesea—and now known as the blockade runner, slaver and pirate—has—demoralized my mental faculties!" exclaimed Abel Force.

"Do you believe Bayard to be a voluntary confederate of the pirate?"

"No! no! If you put the question in that way, I say no! I do not believe it!"

"The young man was a protégé of yours, I have heard."

"Yes."

"Yet you do not know his parentage, or what traits of character he may have inherited, which may have been kept down by circumstances, and only wanted opportunity to spring into life and activity."

"I have known Roland from boyhood; I have watched over him as over a dear son; and I have never seen a low, base, or false trait in his character. His words, his deeds, and his thoughts—so far as I could read them—have always been pure, and true, and high. I cannot think of him in any other light than that of my long knowledge of him—I said from his boyhood. I meant from his babyhood."

"I hope the young fellow's character may be vindicated. But his case looks very bad just at present."

"I hope much from his old captain's interview with him. Roland may be able to explain his position to our satisfaction. I shall wait anxiously for news from the captain. Or Le may be able to throw some light upon this subject. He may be able to tell us why Roland was brought home as a prisoner, instead of as a rescued man. We must wait for more light, Enderby."

"Yes. In the meantime, shall you tell the poor little girl the truth of Bayard's position? Is it necessary that she should be told, just at this point, when we know so little, and that little is so—perhaps—needlessly alarming?"

"No. I think not. I will not tell Rosemary that he is a prisoner. I must tell her only that he is alive and well, and that he will come to see us as soon as he can. Here we are at the hotel. And, thank Heaven! we have good news for Odalite! Our darling is free—absolutely free—and may marry her faithful betrothed to-morrow, if she pleases!" said Abel Force, as he alighted from the carriage, followed by the earl.

They went upstairs together, and entered the parlor, where they found Mrs. Force and the four young girls anxiously awaiting them.

"Did you find Le?" eagerly inquired Mrs. Force.

"Oh! did you find Roland?' breathed Rosemary, clasping her hands.

Odalite, Wynnette and Elva looked all the interest they did not put into words.

"No, my dears, we did not find Le, but we heard of him. He and Roland are both in the city, and both alive and well; and both will come to see us as soon after they shall have found out that we are in Washington as they possibly can," said Mr. Force, throwing himself into a chair.

"Where are they now, papa, besides being in the city, which is a place of 'magnificent distances,' you know?" inquired Wynnette.

"My dear, Le is—everywhere—except here! Le is—ubiquitous! He is a will-o'-the-wisp! We have spent the day in following him about. He was on his ship—but when we got there he was gone to the navy department, and when we reached there he was off to the office of the commissioner of prisoners. When we arrived at the last-mentioned place he was gone back to the navy department. So we came here to report and get a little rest and refreshments, and then we are going down to the navy yard to board the *Argente* and wait there until we see him. He is sure to turn up on the *Argente*—well—sooner or later, as he is in command."

"And—Roland?" softly murmured Rosemary.

"Roland, my dear, is alive and well, but he does not know where you are any more than Le does. We must find Le and let him know that we are here," said Mr. Force.

Then, with a total change of manner, he began:

"Come here, Odalite, my dear, and sit beside me. I have such good news for you as shall give you patience to wait for Le, if he does not come here for a week. But such news that, if he knew it, would bring him within an hour!"

Full of vague expectancy, Odalite came and threw herself down on the sofa beside her father, and looked up into his eyes.

"My dear Odalite, what would be the very best news that you could hear to-day?" he inquired.

Odalite gazed into his eyes, too much excited to speak. Fearing, indeed, to speak, lest his next words should disappoint her raised hopes, while Mrs. Force and every occupant of the room, except the earl, waited breathlessly.

"Oh, tell me, papa! tell me what you have to tell!" pleaded Odalite.

"Tell me, first, what would be the best news you could possibly hear to-day?" persisted Abel Force.

His daughter gazed into his face, while her color went and came—came and went; but she did not speak.

"Well, Odalite?" he inquired.

"Father," she then answered, gravely, "the best news that I could hear, that any of us could hear to-day, would be that the war was ended, the country at peace, and the North and South friends again."

"A conscientious reply, my dear. That would certainly be the best news that any of us could hear. But it is not the news that I have to tell, my love. Try again. My news is of a private nature, and concerns yourself. What would be the best news that you could hear concerning yourself?" persisted the squire.

"That I were free!"

The words came in a tone of impassioned aspiration that spoke volumes of the suffering the girl had endured under the incubus that darkened and oppressed her life.

"Then, my dear, hear it!" said the squire, earnestly.

"Odalite, you are free!"

"Father!"

The cry came from her soul, and it was echoed by her sisters and her friend.

"Abel!"

This was from his wife.

"Yes, my dears, it is true!" replied the squire. "Odalite is free!"

"Anglesea is dead, then? Our terrible enemy is dead!" exclaimed Elfrida Force, with a sigh of infinite relief.

"No, my dears, Anglesea is not dead, I thank Heaven! Long may that gallant soldier and true gentleman live to enrich humanity! But your enemy is dead to you,

Odalite! You are free, my child! As free as either of your sisters! And you have always been free, my dearest dear, although I did not know it until to-day."

"What is the meaning of all this?" demanded Elfrida Force, in a voice of doubt and pain.

"Tell your sister, Enderby. Tell them all—and all about it! I cannot. I am not equal to the task! I should talk like a fool!" said the squire, drawing his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiping his brows.

Thus adjured, the earl looked around on the group of eager listeners, and said, addressing Mrs. Force:

"You may remember, Elfrida, how amazed and incredulous I was when you told me of the disgraceful career of one whom you called by the name of my nearest and dearest friend—Angus Anglesea."

"Yes! yes!" eagerly exclaimed the lady.

"And with good reason was I thus amazed and incredulous! To think a gentleman of purest honor in one hemisphere should become an unmitigated scoundrel in another, was simply impossible! I did not ,and could not, comprehend the enigma, and I did not try!"

"But sometimes you nearly lost your temper with us!" put in Mrs. Force.

"I did; because I thought you ought to have known my brother officer better than to have believed him guilty of all the crimes of which he was accused! Elfrida! I had forgotten one matter that might have cleared up the mystery at once! And that matter was the existence of Byrne Stukely."

"'Byrne Stukely!' Who was he?" inquired Mrs. Force.

"He was the man who, under the name of Angus Anglesea, tried to marry your daughter, but failed so signally that he has not even the shadow of a shade of claim upon Odalite! She will not need the slightest action of the law to free her from that incomplete cere-

mony begun in All Faith Church! No, my dear; Odalite Force, as my brother-in-law has just said, is as free as either of her sisters! Byrne Stukely has a wife and half a dozen children, more or less, living in the town of Angleton, and supported by the charity of Angus Anglesea!"

"But who then, in the name of Old Scratch, is this Byrne Stukely?" demanded the irrepressible Wynnette.

"My dear, wait until I tell your mamma! Byrne Stukely is a distant—very distant—relation of Angus Anglesea, and yet the two distant cousins were, up to the age of twenty or thereabout, as much alike as twin brothers. They must each have inherited the form, features and complexion of some common ancestor; but there all the resemblance between the men ended; for one inherited all the virtues of his progenitors and the other all the vices! They were as opposite in character as they were alike in form. This resemblance lasted, as I said—lasted in its completeness—until the young men grew to be about twenty years of age, when the character of each began to impress itself upon his face, manner and expression. Anglesea developed into a man of the highest and purest moral and intellectual excellence, and became a Christian gentleman and soldier. Stukely sank down to the level of the beasts, and below them—and became a bloated, brutalized criminal and sensualist. No one, who has known both for the last twenty years, could possibly mistake one for the other. Each has grown 'into the likeness of his spirit,' and therefore they have grown far apart."

"I ought to have known he was an impostor!" put in Wynnette. 'I don't mind other people being deceived in the fellow! but for me—me—not to know, the minute I saw the portrait of the real Col. Anglesea, that the other fellow was a fraud!"

"There were many other people deceived in times past

by the exact resemblance between the two men! It was a source of continual embarrassment to the Angleseas of Anglewood. The father of Angus Anglesea procured for young Stukely a midshipman's warrant, and got him sent off to one of our most remote naval stations, to get him out of the way and get rid of him. He went on pretty well for a while. And he received much indulgence, too, for the sake of the benefactor behind him But rectitude was not the forte of Byrne Stukely, and in the end he disgraced his patron and was dismissed the service."

"But how came he in the army?' inquired Wynnette.

"He was never in the army. He was no more a colonel than he was an Anglesea. Nor more a soldier than he was a gentleman. He was in the navy, as I said, and was kicked out of it. Lastly, he has turned up in the slave trade and the general piracy line of business as Capt. Silver."

"Capt. Silver!" echoed every voice, except that of Abel Force.

"Yes, my darlings—Capt. Silver, of the *Argente*. Ostensibly blockade runner only. Subject only to the laws of war—to be held only as a prisoner of war. But really a slaver and a pirate, likely to be tried for his life and hanged for his crimes by this government; or if he should chance to escape conviction and execution here, where the punishment of crime is so very uncertain, still sure to be claimed by the British Government, under the extradition act, and hanged by us, who, you know, will stand no nonsense from slavers and pirates. But now, my darlings, let us leave the subject of the villain and turn to something pleasanter. Odalite, my dear, I congratulate you on your escape. And I hope, when we go down to the *Argente* this afternoon, we shall be able to bring Lieut. Force back with us."

"Heaven grant it!" breathed Odalite, in a low and fervent voice.

"Where is Capt. Grandiere?" inquired Mrs. Force.

"He has gone to look up his mate, young Bayard," replied Mr. Force.

"Oh, I hope he will bring Roland back with him!" sighed Rosemary, who was the frankest little creature in the world.

"I hope he may," said Mr. Force.

"Come! Let us go down to dinner," suggested the earl.

CHAPTER XVI

THE OLD SKIPPER'S DESPAIR

MEANWHILE, Capt. Grandiere, having obtained his pass, got into a crowded street car, en route for the Old Capitol prison. After toiling up the long hill on the north side of the Capitol grounds, the car turned into East Capitol Street.

There the old skipper got off and inquired his way to the "Old Capitol"—a large pile of brick buildings, looking not unlike a warehouse, but which in its time, before the present beautiful edifice had been raised, was used for the councils of the National Congress, and now was turned into a military prison.

Capt. Grandiere found the place—though it looked very much like a Baltimore tobacco depot—and then went up to the main floor, at which a sentry stood on guard.

He showed his pass. The sentinel scrutinized it, returned it to him, and let him in.

He entered a broad passage, with doors on either side, and a staircase in the midst. These doors were all closed, and a sentry stood at every one.

"I wish to see young Ro—Mr. Craven Cloud," said the captain, correcting himself—"one of the officers taken prisoner on the blockade runner *Argente.*"

The sentry to whom he addressed these words looked at his pass, and said, laconically:

"Upstairs."

The old man climbed the stairs, and found himself in an upper passage, with other doors on each side, and another staircase in the midst. These doors were also closed and guarded by sentries.

"I want to see Ro—Mr. Craven Cloud, one of the prisoners from the blockade runner *Argente,*" said the skipper, handing his pass to the nearest sentry, who looked at it, and answered, shortly:

"Upstairs."

The old man groaned, and slowly mounted the second flight of stairs, to find himself in a passage exactly like the one below in all respects of doors, sentries, and a third staircase.

The captain, panting from his long ascent, repeated his formula, and handed his pass, which was returned to him, with the answering formula.

The old man, feeling fatigued and dizzy, began to ascend the third flight of stairs. When he reached the top he found himself in a passage precisely like those below —closed doors, armed sentries, and a fourth staircase, probably leading into the garret.

"I have been a sailor for sixty years, and hope to sail the seas for sixty more! Men have lived hale and hearty to extreme old age, and why not I, who never was drunk or ill in my life? But if I have to go up another flight of stairs I shall be cut off in my prime!' said the captain

to himself, as he leaned, puffing and blowing, against the freshly whitewashed wall.

"I feel just like the

" 'Youth who bore through snow and ice
A banner with a strange device—
Excelsior!'

Which must mean 'Upstairs.' And like him, I shall drop dead at the top. Say! you, sir! I want to see Mr. Craven Cloud, who was taken prisoner from the blockade runner *Argente*. Here's my permit," said the old skipper, as soon as he could get his breath, handing his pass to one of the sentries.

"Room at the end—Number 53," said the soldier, returning the paper.

"Thank Heaven, that is a change for the better!" exclaimed the old man, trotting up the whole length of the passage to a board partition that seemed to have been temporarily put up across the end.

A sentry stood before the door in this partition, and to him the skipper gave his pass.

The sentry unlocked the door and admitted the visitor into the small room that had been partitioned off from the front end of the passage.

The place was clean, fresh and light, but had no furniture except one narrow iron bedstead with a mattress, a pillow and a white spread as clean as the room.

Extended on the mattress lay the young and handsome form of Roland Bayard, clothed only in his white shirt and gray trousers. His hands were clasped above his head and his eyes were open and fixed on the ceiling.

He started up on hearing the visitor enter.

"Roland! Roland! My dear boy, Roland!" cried the old skipper, in a tremulous voice, while the tears started to his eyes.

If the two had been French or German, they would have fallen into each other's arms. Being Americans of English descent, they only clasped hands a little more firmly than usual, gazed into each other's eyes earnestly for a moment, and then sat down on the side of the bed together in silence.

The old skipper at length spoke:

"Roland, my dear, dear boy, how is this?"

"How is—what?" inquired the young man, slowly, and after a pause, speaking in a tone of pain in his hesitating voice, and with a look of pain in his haggard eyes that could not be concealed.

"Oh, you know. Dear lad, you know! You know what I mean! How is that I find you here a prisoner, instead of a free man? Why did you not tell Le that you were a captive among the pirates, not a confederate of them? Le could have corroborated your story and you would have been brought home in honor, not in this way!"

"Le could have done nothing for me, under the circumstances!" replied the young man, in a tone so full of despair that the old skipper looked at him in horror.

"Circumstances, Roland? What circumstances? That devil, Silver, told me he had persuaded you to join his band. But he never told the truth! Surely, surely, Roland, he never told the truth! You never joined the pirate crew! Why do I ask? Of course you never did, and never could!" said the captain, speaking with great assurance, but—looking anxiously into the face of his favorite for confirmation of his words.

No such confirmation came.

Roland put up his hand and covered his eyes; he could not bear to meet that anxious, eager gaze of his old friend.

"Roland, my dear lad, to what circumstances do you

allude? Roland, for my sake—for all our sakes—for—for—little Rosemary's sake, explain yourself!"

The young man kept his eyes covered and his head bowed, while his whole frame shook as with an ague fit.

The old skipper saw the effect of his words, and repeated them:

"For little Rosemary's sake, dear lad!"

"Don't! don't!" wailed Roland. "Don't! don't! I loved the child! Heaven knows how I loved her! She was always the dearest creature on earth to me! I loved her so much that I hope, in these three years of absence, in which she has grown from childhood to womanhood, I hope she has forgotten me!"

These last words were uttered in a wail of anguish.

"But she has not forgotten you, Roland! You are the larger part of her life! From the time I met her on the *Asia*—— Did I tell you that I came over on the same ship with Force and his party?"

"No. Capt. Silver told me that he had set you ashore on the coast of England, not far from Penzance, and so I supposed that you had come home; but I did not know on what ship or in what company! Go on! you were talking about Rosemary."

"We met by chance on board the *Asia*. Of course, there was great surprise on both sides. And, of course, I told them all about the capture of the *Kitty* by the pirates. And the first question my niece asked was about you. And from this she has been in a state of continual anxiety about you—anxiety that has been much increased since she learned of the capture of the *Argente* by the *Eagle*."

"You told her I was with the pirates?"

"As a captive, yes! as a well-treated captive! I was not likely to repeat to her a tale that I did not myself believe, about your having joined the crew," said the captain, indignantly.

Roland again covered his face with his hands, and bowed his head.

"Boy! what am I to think of your silence?" demanded the old skipper, more in sorrow than in anger.

"Oh, my dear old captain, you will think as well of me as you can."

"Are you Capt. Silver's mate? Yes or no?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Roland, if you were the pirate's mate, you would be brave enough to avow it. If you were not, you would be sure to deny it. I do not understand your silence."

The young man did not attempt to explain, but sat with his elbows on his knees and his head bowed upon his hands, in an attitude of despair.

"I will ask you one other question. Perhaps you will answer it. Did you recognize in the pirate Silver the man whom you once knew as Angus Anglesea?"

"Yes, I recognized him," replied Roland, wearily.

"And he recognized you as the youth he was accustomed to see with the Forces?"

"Yes, he knew me at once."

"It must have been a strange meeting between you."

"It was."

"Tell me all about it, Roland, my lad. What did you say to him? What did he say to you when you first met? How did he account for having two characters and two names, eh? Tell me all about it, lad."

"I cannot. Believe me, I cannot. Oh, my old captain! My dear old captain! It wrings my heart to refuse you! I would do anything to please you, but I cannot do this which you ask."

"I don't understand! I don't understand! I don't believe I shall ever understand!" exclaimed the perplexed captain, shaking his gray head.

"Perhaps you never will in this world, but I hope that you will in the world to come, when the secrets of all

hearts shall be revealed. In the meantime—oh, judge me as charitably as you can!" pleaded Roland.

"Heaven knows that I wish to do so, my dear lad! Perhaps you may answer me one more question—a last one: Why did you drop your lawful name of 'Roland Bayard,' and take another by which you are now known—'Craven Cloud?' You need not answer if you do not choose?"

"I will tell you. The life of a blockade runner——"

"Blockade runner be blowed!" angrily exclaimed the old skipper. "Pirate, you mean! You can't blind me with—blockade runner! Not after her taking the *Kitty*, you can't! Pirate, lad—pirate!"

"Just as you please! The life, I say, on such a ship is uncertain; death often tragic. I did not wish to carry an honest name through such a life, or to such a death. In a word—if those who loved me were destined to hear one Craven Cloud—blockade runner, pirate, slaver, as you please—had been taken and hanged, I did not wish them to know that I was the man. I took an alias, and I made it Craven Cloud because the name suited the case. There! that is all."

"But, Roland, you are no pirate—no slaver. It is impossible that you should be!" exclaimed the old skipper with the utmost confidence, yet still eagerly, prayerfully gazing into the troubled face of his young mate for confirmation of those words.

But still no such confirmation came.

The door opened and a soldier entered.

"Sorry," he said, in a serio-comic spirit in which some of the soldiers jested their cares away, "sorry to separate you, but the best of friends must part. Shutting up time has come, and the word is march!"

"Do you mean I must go?" inquired the old skipper.

"That's about the measure of it, granddad."

"Good-by, Roland, lad! Mind, I don't believe any ill

of you, in spite of all. I shall come to see you again tomorrow, and bring Rosemary with me."

"No! no! no! no! Do not bring her! I am parted from Rosemary forever! The sight of her—would unman me!" cried the youth.

"Then—what am I to say to her when I see her?"

"Say—the best you can—the fairest, the most merciful you can!" exclaimed Roland.

The old skipper wrung the youth's hand and left the room.

He returned to the hotel, but kept entirely out of the way of the Forces. He had not the courage to meet Rosemary.

CHAPTER XVII

ON BOARD THE PRIZE

Soon after dinner the earl and the squire left the hotel for the ship.

They took a street car that ran from Georgetown to the navy yard gate.

There they alighted and entered the yard, passed the officers' quarters, passed the workshops and the ship house and went down to the water side.

As they neared it they saw an officer in naval uniform standing with his back toward them, and his gaze directed toward a boat, rowed by six men, that was swiftly coming toward the shore.

Mr. Force quickened his steps and laid his hand on the arm of the man, whom he had recognized as Le.

The latter turned quickly, started joyfully, and held out both hands, exclaiming:

"Uncle Abel!"

"Le, dear boy!" cried the squire, seizing the youth's hands and shaking them cordially.

"You here! What a surprise! How glad I am to see you! I thought you were in Europe. When did you return? How are my aunt and cousins? And how is Odalite? And——"

"Softly, Le. Softly, dear lad. One thing at a time. We have just arrived from Europe, and we are all well. And here is a friend of yours whom you are forgetting," said the squire, taking the young man's arm and leading him back to where the earl stood.

"Lord Enderby! How glad I am to see you! This is another joyful surprise. You are looking so well, too. Quite recovered your health, I hope," said Le, cordially shaking the hand the earl had given him.

"Quite recovered, thank you," replied the latter.

"Where are you stopping, Uncle Abel?"

"We are stopping at the old place where we boarded six years ago, when we first came to Washington. And we have been following you about for the last twenty-four hours," replied Mr. Force.

"And to think I have passed that hotel at least a dozen times within a day without knowing that you were there! What a surprise! And you say Odalite is quite well?"

"Odalite and all are quite well."

"I am so glad to hear that! And to know that they are all so near! When can I see them?"

"As soon as you please. It will depend on yourself. They have been waiting for twenty-four hours most anxiously to see you."

"What a surprise! I cannot get over the surprise. There is the boat, Uncle Abel. Will you and Lord Enderby return with me on board the ship, and spend a few hours with me in the cabin, where we can talk " Le inquired, as the boat touched the wharf and the rowers laid on their oars.

"We came down here for that very purpose," replied the squire.

"Come, then."

The three gentlemen walked down to the water's edge and entered the boat.

The sailors pushed off, turned and headed for the *Argente.*

It was a pretty view. The sun had just set, and the western sky was aflame with the crimson afterglow which was reflected in the water. The full moon was rising like a vast globe of gold above the gray eastern horizon. In the distance before them was the green and wooded shore of Maryland. Midway of the river lay the *Argente* at anchor, reflected clearly and duplicated distinctly in the water below.

They soon reached the ship and stood upon the deck.

A young midshipman saluted his superior officer.

Le introduced him as Midshipman Franklin, exchanged a few words with him, and then took his friends down into his own cabin.

This was quite a luxuriously furnished place for the cabin of a man-of-war, as the pirate ship seemed in a small way to be. An Axminster carpet was on the floor, and blue satin damask curtains before the berths; blue satin damask coverings on the chairs and sofas. A marble-topped round table stood in the center. A marble-topped sideboard, with silver stands for decanters and glasses, stood at the end opposite the companion way.

Le drew chairs around the table and invited his friends to be seated.

Then he went to the sideboard and brought forth a bottle of old port wine, with wineglasses, and a box of choice Havana cigars, with wax tapers, and putting them on the table, exclaimed, for the fourth time:

"What a surprise! I shall never get over this surprise!"

"You talk of surprises, Le!" said Mr. Force, when they had all had a glass of wine around, and had lighted their cigars. "You talk of surprises; but you ought to have grown hardened to them by this time! No one could ever have had a greater one than you had when you found in the pirate captain and his mate your old enemy, Angus Anglesea, and your old friend, Roland Bayard!"

"You may well say that, uncle! But I do believe it was the sight of my old foe that put the devil in me that day and made me utterly reckless of my life in that fight."

"We have all read of your heroism in action, Le, my dear boy, and we are proud of you," said the squire.

"It wasn't heroism, uncle! It was diabolism! If ever the devil got into mortal man he did into me that day! And it was all at the sight of Anglesea."

"No matter, the papers are full of the brilliant action, and you are the hero of the hour."

"Of the hour. You are right, uncle! Of the hour! In these days of heroes—on both sides, mind, uncle—no one man, whatever his deeds, could expect to hold public attention for a longer time. But, indeed—and there is no mock modesty in what I say—I have no merit. I was more mad than brave in that action."

"Your captain, in his dispatches to the department, puts the case in a better light. But let that pass for the present. Do you know who the pirate really is?" demanded the squire.

"No more than that he is Capt. Silver, known to us as Col. Anglesea," said Le.

"He is neither entitled to the one name nor the other."

"Neither Silver nor Anglesea? Who is he, then?" demanded the young commander, in surprise.

"Enderby, dear fellow! You, who can speak with authority, tell Leonidas who the man really is."

The earl, thus entreated, turned to the young officer

and told him the story of Byrne Stukely, as it is already known to our readers.

Le listened with the closest attention, and at the close of the narrative drew a deep sigh of relief and breathed forth a fervent thanksgiving.

"And so you see by what Enderby has told you, that the rascal has not now, nor ever has had, the slightest claim on the hand of Odalite, who is now, and always has been, perfectly free. There is not even any need to seek the aid of the law in her case," said Mr. Force.

"Thank Heaven! Oh! thank Heaven!" again fervently exclaimed Le.

Then, after a pause, he asked:

"Uncle, when can I see Odalite?"

"As soon as you please, my boy!"

"I wish I could see her to-night. But to-night duty holds me here. Franklin, my second in command, has gone on shore for the first time to see his family, who reside here, and whom he has not seen for three years. So I cannot get off to-night! But early to-morrow! How early may I see her to-morrow?"

"Come and breakfast with us at nine to-morrow. That is about as early as we can manage."

"I will go!"

"And now, Le, tell us about Roland Bayard. How comes it that he is in the uniform of the pirate's mate? How comes it that he is brought here as a prisoner, instead of as a rescued captive?"

The countenance of the young man fell, all the joyous life died out of it, and he murmured:

"I had forgotten! In my own selfish joy I had forgotten!"

"Forgotten? What, Le?"

"I had forgotten Roland's position. Oh, Uncle Abel! It is a most cruel one!"

"Tell me one thing," sternly demanded Mr. Force. "Was he Silver's mate?"

"I do not know."

"You do not know, Le? What do you mean by that? Surely you must know!"

"Indeed, I do not, uncle. After the fight was over, and when the two prisoners were placed under my charge on board this ship, and she was manned by a part of the crew from the *Eagle,* and I was ordered to take her home, when we had set sail and were well on our way I went to see Roland, to ask him some explanation of his presence on board the blockade runner. He was not known there as Roland Bayard, but as Craven Cloud. I found him alone, for the two prisoners had been confined separately. I found him moody to the verge of melancholy madness. I told him how grieved I was to find him there, and asked him to tell me how it happened, when he had left Capt. Grandiere, whether he had joined the navy and had been captured in some action."

"And what did he reply to all these questions?" inquired Mr. Force, seeing that Le paused in his narrative.

"Not one satisfactory word! He told me that fate had brought him there, and that he could tell me no more. And though I plied him with questions, and appealed to him to answer them in the name of our lifelong love for one another, he remained obdurate. He assured me that he could not satisfy me."

"And he never did?"

"He never did. But one day he told me the reason why his tongue was tied."

"And what was that?"

"It was a terrible revelation, uncle—a terrible revelation! But it accounted for everything that was strange

in Roland's life and conduct," replied Le, still shrinking from the utterance of what he had to say.

"Well, well, my boy?' demanded the squire.

"He told me that Capt. Silver was his own father!"

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the earl.

The squire was silent for a moment, and then said, in the most emphatic manner:

"I don't believe it! It is not true!"

"Oh! sir, it was true—too true! He had every proof of its truth! Therefore, you understand that poor Roland, if he was a prisoner among the blockade runners and a witness to deeds even more unlawful and more criminal, could not open his mouth with explanations that might be fatal to Capt. Silver."

"The scoundrel is no more Roland's father than I am! No, not by an infinite distance, for I have been a father to the boy ever since he was a baby. And I know that scoundrel is nothing to him! I know the reason why he told such a falsehood to the young man. It was to get him into his power and seal his lips! Did Roland, for instance, tell you how he came to be separated from Capt. Grandiere, and to be on board the blockade runner, or rather the pirate, as she really was?"

"No, sir. I explained to you that he would tell me nothing but that fate had brought him there."

"Of course. Then I will tell you. Capt. Grandiere's ship, the *Kitty,* was taken by the pirate *Argente* about six weeks since only. Her crew were put into open boats and sent adrift to sink or swim, find land or perish, as fate might will. Her two officers, Skipper Grandiere and Mate Bayard, were taken prisoners, and brought on board the *Argente*, while a part of the pirate crew were sent on board the *Kitty,* to take her, with her rich cargo, to some port—Heaven knows where! That is how young Bayard came on board the pirate ship."

"Is—it—possible!" exclaimed Le, in amazement.

"Yes; and from the time the master and mate of the *Kitty* were captured by Silver they were never allowed to meet. Roland, who had been wounded, was kept below in the cockpit. Silver told Capt. Grandiere that Bayard had decided to take service with him, and did not wish to see his old captain for fear of unpleasant words. Silver was near the English coast, and he sent a boat ashore at night and landed the old skipper on a remote beach in Cornwall, and left him to find his way to London as best he might."

"But how did you find out all this, Uncle Abel?" inquired Le, unable to get over his amazement.

"Grandiere went up to London on a third-class train, found his correspondents, told his story, got what money he wanted, and engaged passage on the *Asia* from Liverpool to New York. We came over on the same steamer. That is how we came to know it."

"Where is Capt. Grandiere now?" inquired Le.

"In Washington, staying at the same hotel with us. You may judge our surprise, and his triumph, when on reaching New York, three days since, we learned that the blockade runner *Argente* had been captured by the United States man-of-war *Eagle,* and had been sent home as a prize, under the command of Lieut. Force. We came down to Washington by the first train—I and my party—to see you and Roland; but Capt. Grandiere avowedly to prove Silver to be a pirate, and to hang him. Capt. Grandiere will now also be able to prove that young Roland Bayard was captured by the pirates at the same time that his ship, the *Kitty,* was taken, and he, the skipper, taken prisoner. Capt. Grandiere's evidence must vindicate Roland Bayard."

"Oh! if it only could! But, uncle, if Roland will not deny that he was a voluntary member of the pirate crew?"

"He will deny it, when he knows the pirate lied to him and deceived him, and has no claim whatever to his forbearance, much less to his duty or affection," said Mr. Force.

It was growing late, and Mr. Force arose to go.

"Uncle," said Le, "why cannot you and the earl stay on board with me to-night? I can send a man with a note to the hotel to let the ladies know where you are, and I can make you up most comfortable berths in this cabin. And to-morrow we can all three go and breakfast with our friends," pleaded the young man.

"Le, my lad, I should like it extremely, but I cannot speak for Enderby," replied the squire.

"I propose this," said the earl—"that I return to the hotel to take care of the ladies, and prepare them for your reception in the morning, leaving you here, Force, with your nephew."

The earl's proposal was accepted by acclamation, and soon after he took his leave, and was rowed ashore, leaving the uncle and nephew to spend the night together on the ship.

CHAPTER XVIII

A TERRIBLE REVELATION

"We must wait until Franklin comes on board," said Leonidas Force, the next morning, as he stood beside Mr. Force, on the deck of the *Argente,* looking off toward the navy yard, where a boat had already been sent to bring out the young midshipman.

"Will he be punctual?" inquired Mr. Force, who was almost as impatient as his companion to be off to keep their appointment to breakfast with the ladies of their family at the hotel that morning.

"'Punctual!'" echoed Le. "His orders are to report on board at seven this morning, and he will be here on time."

Mr. Force took out his watch and looked at it.

"It wants twelve minutes to seven now!" he exclaimed.

"And here comes Franklin!" replied Le, as the young midshipman was seen running across the yard down to the water's edge, where the boat waited.

As he jumped on board, the boat was seen to turn and head for the ship.

In a few minutes it had crossed the water and come up alongside.

Young Franklin sprang out and climbed up on deck

"Two minutes to seven! You are prompt, midshipman," said Le, smiling.

"I would rather be an hour too soon than a second too late, lieutenant," replied the young officer, saluting.

"Quite right! Tell the coxswain to wait. He is to take this gentleman and myself ashore," said Le.

Then he went down into his cabin, followed by Mr. Force, to make a few final preparations.

Soon they returned to the deck, went down into the boat, and headed for the shore.

When they landed, and were walking across the yard, Le asked:

"I may at last marry Odalite without let or hindrance?"

"I have told you so, lad!"

"Yes, bless you, uncle! But how soon? How soon?"

"This very day, if Odalite and her mother agree."

"Let us walk faster, uncle! Please!" pleaded the impatient lover.

"My dear Le! Consider—consider my rheumatism! Besides, look! There is no car near the gate, and we shall pass through before one comes up."

Le saw at once that fast walking would not bring him any sooner to the side of his sweetheart, and so he moderated his haste.

They reached the gate just as a car came up, and they entered it while the horses were being unharnessed and turned around.

"If one had but wings!" said Le.

"You would find them inconvenient on most occasions," replied Mr. Force.

Several other passengers now entered the car, and it started on its uptown trip.

Passengers from the sidewalks, however, continued to stop the car and crowd in until it was more than full, for every seat was occupied, and all the standing room between the rows, as well as both platforms before and behind.

This was always the condition of the street cars in war times, when authorities were as careless of the lives of horses as they were of those of men.

All private conversation was rendered impossible, and Mr. Force rode on in perfect silence, half suffocated by the close air and heavily pressed upon by a crowd of men standing up in the middle, hanging on by the straps and swaying to and fro against the forms of their fellow passengers.

At last—"long last"—the ordeal was over. The toiling horses reached the corner of the street on which their hotel was situated, and Mr. Force pulled the strap to stop the car, and with his companion slowly pushed, elbowed and worked his way out of the "black hole" in the open air.

"There is one comfort in this difficulty in getting out—though our clothes are often torn and our flesh scratched or bruised in the trial—yet it gives the wretched horses a minute's rest," said the squire, as, fol-

lowed by Le, he made his way across the pavement to the ladies' entrance of the house.

Here a great shock met him.

The earl, pale and grave, stood in the hall waiting for him.

He bowed to Le, and then took the arm of his brother-in-law, and said:

"Come with me, Force—lieutenant, you will find the young ladies in the parlor."

Le, surprised and vaguely uneasy, hesitated for a moment, and then ran upstairs.

"What is the meaning of this, Enderby? What has happened?" anxiously inquired the squire.

"Your wife is not well. She——"

"She is ill! She is dangerously ill! Let me go to her! Let me go to her at once!" exclaimed the terrified husband, breaking from the earl's hold.

"No, no, I beg of you! It would be useless! She is—sleeping! Two physicians and a nurse watch beside her, and they forbid all approach for the present. Come in here with me!" said the earl, drawing his brother-in-law into the nearest room, which happened to be a temporarily untenanted private parlor.

"When did this happen? Why was I not sent for at once? What is the nature of her illness? Oh, my dear wife!" exclaimed the squire, as he fell rather than sat down upon the nearest chair.

The earl closed the door and turned the key, and then answered:

"Not an hour ago! They—Elfrida and her daughter, with Miss Hedge and myself—were in the drawing room waiting for your arrival before ordering breakfast. A servant brought in the morning paper, and Wynnette took it to read aloud for the benefit of the party. She turned first to the report of the examination of the two prisoners, Silver and Cloud, alias Stukely and Bayard,

and of the demand of the British Government for their extradition upon charge of piracy and slave dealing."

"Good Heaven!"

"The demand was said to have come through the British consul at New York, who had been on the watch for the possible capture by our ships of this same pirate ship."

"Then old Grandiere's word will come true!"

"Probably! But as Wynnette read I happened to look at my sister. She had grown deadly pale. I arose to go to her, but she raised her hand with a gesture of command that stopped me, and she listened to the end of the reading, and then, with her wonderful self-control—deadly pale as she was—arose to leave the room. Wynnette had not observed the change in her mother; but Odalite and Elva had done so, and both of them sprang to her side. Her attack was so sudden and unaccountable."

"I understand! I understand!" muttered Mr. Force to himself.

"But she waved the girls back in the most peremptory manner, and went alone to her room. The children came back to me, and gazed in my face for an explanation. I could give them none. They once more started to follow their mother. But I called them back, and told them to be patient. Then the condition of little Rosemary Hedge claimed attention. She was sobbing violently on the sofa. I told my nieces to respect their mother's wish to be left alone; that she was probably overcome by the ill news of one whom she had known from his boyhood, and that she would best recover her composure in solitude."

"I understand! I understand!" again murmured the poor squire to himself.

"I went to Rosemary, and sought to soothe her. While I was so engaged little Elva slipped away and went up

to her mother's room, and instantly came shrieking back, telling us, in wild and incoherent exclamations, that her mother lay unconscious on the floor of her chamber

"Gracious! Gracious heavens!" groaned the squire.

"We hurried to her assistance, all of us, even Rosemary, who forgot her own grief at this crisis. We found her on the carpet in a deep swoon.

"She lay face downward, and dressed as if for a journey. By her side lay a traveling bag, which seemed to have dropped from her hand as she fell."

"I understand! Oh, I understand too well! too well!" muttered the squire to himself.

"We got her on the bed, and sent for a doctor. There was one in the house, who heard of the event, and came first. Then the doctor whom we had sent for arrived. They are with her now. One of them procured a professional nurse. And they are all three agreed upon one point—that no one but the doctor or nurse be allowed to enter the room."

"But I must go to her door. I will not make the least noise; but I must go to the door and see one of the physicians," said Mr. Force, rising.

"I will go with you," said the earl.

The two gentlemen left the room together, and went up two flights of stairs to the floor on which was the suit of rooms occupied by the Forces.

They paused before the door of the chamber of illness, or it might be of death, and Mr. Force tapped very gently.

It was the nurse, a wholesome-looking, middle-aged woman, who answered the summons.

"I wish to see one of the physicians," whispered Abel Force, in a voice that trembled with emotion.

The woman stepped noiselessly back into the room, and was presently succeeded by Dr. Bolten, a large, fair, bald-headed man, of about sixty years of age. He

stepped out into the passage noiselessly, closing the door behind him. Then, in a whisper, he greeted Mr. Force, with whom he had been acquainted.

"How is my wife?" he inquired, in breathless anxiety.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BITTERNESS OF DEATH

THE doctor took the squire's arm and led him away from the door before he answered:

"She is doing as well as possible under the circumstances. All depends now on absolute quiet. It was for that reason I summoned a trained nurse and forbid any of the family to approach her."

"But what is the nature of her illness, doctor?"

"She has received a severe mental shock."

"Of what nature?"

"I do not know."

"Will—will she—recover?"

"With great care, I hope so."

"Can I go in—very quietly—and look upon her?"

"Not if you speak to her. Not if you waken her."

"I will neither speak to her nor waken her. You shall see how noiseless I can be."

"I am not going back to her room. I have all my patients to see yet, but I will call again in the afternoon. Dr. Hollis will remain a little longer. And the nurse, Mrs. Winder, can be relied on. If you enter the room, Mr. Force, let me entreat you to make no sound," said Dr. Bolton, bowing, and passing the squire on his way downstairs.

Mr. Force softly turned the handle of the lock, which had been oiled, and entered the room.

On the bed, covered with a white counterpane up to her chin, lay the form of his fair wife, still and white as death. On one side of her sat the nurse; on the other side stood the doctor.

Mr. Force raised his finger in token that he did not mean to speak, nor expect to be spoken to, and so he approached the bed on tiptoe, and gazed upon the marble features, colorless except for the dark rings around the eyes and lips.

As the husband gazed a spasm of anguish convulsed his features. He turned his eyes from the face of his wife to that of the young doctor who stood over her.

Dr. Hollis smiled and placed his finger on his lips.

Abel Force understood both signs, and felt a little hope steal into his heart. He stood for some time longer gazing upon the beloved face, and then, at another sign from the doctor, he turned to steal noiselessly from the room.

As he went from the bedside toward the door his eyes fell on a large packet of paper, with a note tied on the top of it. And as he passed he took it up, thinking that it might be something that required to be sent to the post office.

After leaving the room and closing the door softly behind him, he looked at the superscription of the packet. And it was this:

"To my dear husband, Abel Force. To be opened by him alone."

The packet was sealed and tied with a cord, under which was slipped a letter, directed simply to Abel Force, Esq.

When Mr. Force had looked at this packet he showed neither surprise at its existence or impatience to read it. Without breaking the seal, he slipped it into his pocket,

and went quietly down to the parlor in search of his troubled young people.

He found them all seated as if they had been at a funeral.

Odalite and Le occupied one of the small sofas. Old Capt. Grandiere sat in a large armchair, with his little niece, Rosemary, on his knees, her head on his shoulder and her arms around his neck. She had sobbed herself into exhaustion, and therefore into quietness, and was listening calmly to the consolation the old skipper was trying to give her, and which was something like this:

"I tell you, my pet, he may be as stubborn as a mule, and hold his tongue until he loses the use of it, but I know that, not two months since, he was taken prisoner off my ship, along with me and all the crew, and so far from being the pirate's mate, he was the pirate's prisoner. I'll tell my own story, and it will clear Roland as sure as it will hang Silver."

This, in every form and variety of language, was the oft-repeated consolation that the old skipper was offering to his little niece, and not without effect.

Elva and Wynnette were seated with the earl, who was talking to them in a low voice, and evidently trying to keep up their spirits.

As soon as the squire entered the room his daughters all hurried to meet him, with anxious looks.

"My dears," he said, "the doctors speak hopefully of your mother's condition. Let us be patient and trust in Providence; and for the present, my children, you must control your feelings and keep away from her room."

But this did not satisfy the daughters of Elfrida Force. They plied their father with questions:

"What is the matter with mamma?"

"Did the doctors tell you what ails her?"

"When will she get well?"

"How soon may we see her?"

And so forth, and so forth.

Mr. Force answered these questions as well as he was able, but not at all satisfactorily.

The old skipper broke in upon their talk.

"Force! I wish to the Lord you would order these girls down to breakfast! Here it is ten o'clock and not one of us has had a mouthful."

"My dears, is that true?" demanded their father.

"Oh, we could not touch any food so long as we felt so anxious about dear mamma!" answered Odalite, for the whole party.

"Come down at once! Le, give Odalite your arm! Grandiere, take care of Rosemary! Enderby, look after Wynnette! Come, my little Elva, under my own wing," said the squire.

And so the party of eight went down to the public breakfast room, but in truth no one but the earl, the old skipper, and the young lieutenant made any pretense of eating. The husband and daughters of Elfrida Force could not feed while the life of the wife and mother was in jeopardy. But they drank some strong coffee, which served to support their strength.

After breakfast the young girls returned to the drawing room under the escort of the earl and the old captain; but Le remained by the side of Abel Force, who walked toward the office of the hotel.

"The occupant of the little room adjoining our own has left this morning, and I wish to engage the apartment before any one else takes it; for, Le, if the doctors will not allow me to remain in the same apartment with my suffering wife, I must, at least, be in the next one, if possible," said Mr. Force, as he went up to the counter.

The room was secured, and the two men turned to go upstairs together.

"Uncle," said Le, "Odalite will not give me any an-

swer! Will not fix a day for our marriage until her mother recovers."

"Odalite is right, Le! How can she think of marriage, or of anything but her mother at this crisis?" solemnly inquired Abel Force.

"Oh, uncle, we have been so often disappointed, so often put off! It does seem as if fate were against us!"

"Don't be selfish, Le! Think, my dear boy, what anxiety we are all suffering just now!"

"I know it, uncle! I know it, and I share it! But how could our marriage affect the present circumstances? It could not increase the danger of my aunt, nor could it heighten our anxiety," pleaded the youth.

"My dear Le, your passion blinds you to the fact that your marriage at this time would be deeply indecorous! Say no more about it, dear lad, until our beloved sufferer is out of danger."

Le sighed profoundly, but did not answer.

"Le," said the squire, in a low voice, to change the subject, "have you told old Grandiere why it is that Roland will not give evidence against the pirate captain, even to save himself?"

"Yes; I have told him that Roland has been persuaded by Silver, that he, Silver, is his, Roland's, father.

"He said that he didn't believe one word of it. He said that when the villain was down in Maryland he must have heard the story of the young man having been saved in his infancy from the wreck of the *Carrier Pigeon,* without a mark on person or clothing to point to his parentage, and taken advantage of the circumstance to claim Roland as his son, and get him in his power."

"I think Grandiere was right," said Abel Force.

When they reëntered the parlor they found all their party present, idle and silent, because, in fact, they could settle themselves to neither occupation nor conversation while their minds were so full of anxiety.

Le went and sat down beside Odalite.

Mr. Force lingered a few moments in the room to bid his troubled daughters to trust in Providence and hope for the best. Then, telling them he was going up to sit in the room he had engaged adjoining their mother's, and that he might be found there if wanted, he left the parlor and went upstairs.

First he stopped at the door of the side room and tapped lightly.

The nurse came to answer the summons.

"How is she?" he whispered.

The nurse came out and softly closed the door behind her before answering:

"She is sleeping quietly, and must not be disturbed on any account."

"Thank you. That will do. I am going to sit in the next room. If I should be wanted, come to me there."

"Yes, sir," said the woman, returning noiselessly to the sick chamber, and closing the door behind her.

As Mr. Force turned away, his eyes fell upon the form of Rosemary Hedge moving silently as a spirit along the corridor.

He went to her and whispered:

"What is it, my dear?"

"Nothing. I am only going to our room to put on my hat. Uncle Grandiere is going to take me to see dear Roland," replied the girl.

"Ah, that is right. God bless you, my dear!" said the squire, as Rosemary passed on to the large, double-bedded room in the same corridor which was occupied by the four girls.

CHAPTER XX

"WHEN LOVERS MEET IN ADVERSE HOUR"

ROSEMARY quickly put on the olive green linsey suit in which she had crossed the sea, and the little round traveling cap in which she had ridden to the city, and hurried downstairs to join her uncle.

Her dress was not too warm for these late April days.

"Come, my little love," said the old skipper, "I could not find a carriage for you on the stand, nor even at the livery stable around the corner; so there is nothing for us but to pack ourselves into a moving black hole they call a street car or to walk. I think by walking fast we could reach Capitol Hill sooner than by riding in one of these cars."

"Let us walk, by all means," promptly replied Rosemary.

Then went downstairs together and set out for a brisk rate down Pennsylvania Avenue.

It was a fine morning, with a bright sun, and a deep blue sky mottled lightly with feathery white clouds, as became an April day.

"You must keep up your heart, little girl," said the old man, as they walked on.

"I do try to do so. I have trust in the Lord; and, under Him, in you, Uncle Gideon. But oh! when I think of how the news affected her, my heart almost dies in my breast," sighed the girl.

"Mrs. Force, do you mean?"

"Yes, of course."

"But why?"

"Oh, don't you see? If the news of Roland's danger affected her so greatly, his state must be very serious."

"My dear, Roland may have had nothing to do with

the lady's attack. It looks to me as if it was an apoplectic fit, such as might have happened to any middle-aged man or woman without any outside cause. Besides, I never heard of Mrs. Force taking the least interest in the young man, or even the slightest notice of him beyond mere civility."

"Yes, she did—I am sure she did! I always thought—but indeed I hardly know why I thought so—that she was kinder to me on account of Roland. She always sympathized with me. And it was the news of Roland's peril that brought on her illness—I know it was!"

"How do you know it, my dear?"

"Because I was watching her while Wynnette was reading the paper. I was almost ready to die with my trouble, and I was looking to her for help and comfort—because she always sympathized with me—and I saw her start, and her eyes grow wide and scared, and her face turn white; and then I saw her rise to leave the room. And then, but not till then, the others saw her, and went to her; but she sent them all back. And I knew it was about Roland, and I thought there was no hope for him, and I fell to screaming. Oh, uncle, it was so very bad in me to go on screaming so, but I couldn't help it. I couldn't faint and forget all about it, like Amanda Fitzallen used to do when she couldn't stand things any longer, so I had to keep screaming. If I hadn't I do think my heart would have bursted!"

"It was all quite enough to frighten you into hysterics, my poor little girl, when I was not on hand to reassure you. But still, my dear, in future you must control yourself. There is nothing more contemptible in this world than a man or woman who cannot control himself or herself."

"But, uncle—my heart would have bursted if I hadn't screamed."

"Then, my dear, you should have let it burst, rather

than have screamed. This may seem harsh to you, my dear, but it is the best kindness. Self-control, my little girl, is one of the mightiest powers in this world. It is the soul of the ruler, my dear," said the old skipper; and having taken this text he preached on it until they reached the foot of the Capitol Hill, and he lost his wind in climbing up it.

In a short time they reached the Old Capitol prison.

Capt. Grandiere had procured two passes, and armed with these, presented himself and his niece at the guarded door, and was permitted to enter.

"I know the way now! But let me take a long breath before I begin to climb all these stairs that are before us!" said the old man, as he dropped upon a rude bench in the hall and began to wipe his face.

Rosemary sat down beside him, and peeped charily through her green veil at the sentries that stood before the closed doors on each side the hall.

Presently the captain arose and told Rosemary to come along, and began to ascend the stairs.

They went up three flights and found themselves on the third floor of the building, in a wide passage, with closed doors, guarded by sentries on each side.

Walking between these they reached the front end of the hall, where a small apartment had been made across it by a partition of wood. Before a rude door a sentry stood.

Capt. Grandiere showed his permits, and the soldier opened the door to let them pass.

They entered the small room, which, however, had the advantage of a large window and of perfect cleanliness—of almost aggressive cleanliness—for everything smelt of fresh water and fresh whitewash.

Roland Bayard sat on the side of his narrow cot, engaged in reading the morning paper.

As his visitors entered the place he looked up, and gave a cry of mingled pleasure and reproach.

"Uncle! Rosemary! Oh, Rosemary! Oh, uncle, how could you? Why did you?"

"Roland! Dear Roland! I couldn't help it! I wanted to see you so much! Oh, Roland, you are glad to see me, are you not?" pleaded Rosemary, going to him and putting both her hands on his shoulders, with all the innocent candor of her childhood.

" 'Glad' to see you? 'Glad!' " echoed the young man, in a broken voice, as he took her tiny hands and pressed them to his heart and to his lips, while his hot tears fell upon them.

Rosemary burst into a storm of tears and wept upon his shoulder.

"Oh, uncle!" reproachfully exclaimed Roland, "why did you bring this child here?"

"Because no power on earth would have kept her away! If I had not brought her, she would have done some deadly thing! She would have gone and got a pass for herself. She would have come here alone and exposed herself to insult on the way! You don't know what desperate dare-devils these little blue-eyed angels of our race can be, where their friends are in danger or in trouble!" said the old man.

"And, oh! it is not only that I wanted to see you," said Rosemary, raising her tearful face from his shoulder, "but I wanted to beg you for my sake—for my sake, Roland, to be just to yourself! To have mercy on yourself! You know, as we know, that you are not a pirate or a slave-stealer! You know, as we know, that you were taken prisoner by the pirates when the *Kitty* was captured! Capt. Grandiere can testify to that! But he cannot swear that you never joined the pirate crew after you became their prisoner! He cannot swear that you never became the pirate captain's mate, as they charge

you with being. Only you can tell what you did after recovering from your wounds on board the pirate ship. We know that you remained true to yourself and to your friends and to every principle of manhood and honesty, and we could swear that you did, from our lifelong knowledge of you! But, oh, Roland! But, oh, Roland! Such testimony would not be worth anything in a court of law, where moral conviction is not legal evidence! Oh, dear, dear Roland! Take pity on yourself and on us, and testify to the facts that will vindicate you!"

These were her words, but no pen can give the pleading, prayerful, pathetic tones and looks and gestures with which they were uttered.

The whole strong frame of the young man shook with the emotion that convulsed his soul.

"Rosemary!" he said, at length, in a broken voice, "I am about to speak the words that must separate us forever."

He paused, and she took up his cue.

"That you cannot do, Roland! Neither man nor angel can utter words which would separate us forever. In this world we may be parted, Roland, if such be your will. But not forever! Not forever!" she said, in her tender, vibrating tones.

"Rosemary, hear me! I cannot give the testimony that would vindicate myself, because the same testimony would convict Capt. Silver."

"He will be convicted fast enough without your testimony," put in the old skipper.

"Then it would help to convict him, so I must not give it."

"But, oh! Roland, why should you care for that wicked man—that wickedest man in the whole world?" pleaded Rosemary.

"Because, poor child—and now come the words that must part us—because I am his son!"

Rosemary stared in blank amazement, while she grew pale as ashes.

"You are no more his son than you are my son! And not half so much as you are Abel Force's son! Deuce take you, lad, are you such a baby as to be beguiled by that man's lies? He found out your early history, and has made use of the facts, as well as of the want of facts, to deceive you and claim you as his son, to get you in his power, to make you his comrade, if he could, and to tie your tongue in any case. Ah! you must be a blind bat, indeed, not to see through him!"

"Ah! Capt. Grandiere, old friend, you do not know! You do not know! Capt. Silver has proved the truth of his story to me," replied Roland, in a tone of despair.

"How has he proved this?" demanded the old skipper.

"I dare not tell you that. His story involves the—the —honor of another—of another family. I cannot breathe another word on this subject beyond the bare fact that I know myself to be Silver's son, and will not give testimony to convict my father. So much was due to you, and told that you may know why I will not testify."

"Then ——! ——! ——!" The old skipper let off a volley of oaths that might have been highly effectual in a storm at sea, or a fight with pirates, but that fell on Rosemary's delicate ears like claps of thunder, and made her put her hands up to shelter them—and he finished by saying—"If I don't give a hint to the authorities and have you put upon the stand and compelled to give evidence."

The young man made no reply, but turning to Rosemary, began to ask about their mutual friends.

The girl answered all his questions to the best of her knowledge.

This conversation lasted until the old skipper arose to take leave.

"Captain," said Roland, "my advice to you is to take Rosemary down to Maryland and leave her there with her friends. Washington, under present circumstances, is certainly no place for the child."

"I will not go, Roland. I will not stir from this city until I see you through this trouble!" said the girl.

"You hear that?" inquired the old skipper. "And you see that I could not get her away without turning Turk and tyrant, and calling in the power of the law and using force and violence to back up that. What can an old ruffian like me, even though I weigh two hundred pounds, and am the terror of the roughest crew afloat, do with a mite of a blue-eyed angel? She'll do as she likes, if she dies for it!" growled the skipper.

"You will let me come to see you every day, Roland, and in that way I can try to bear this," pleaded Rosemary.

"May the Lord bless you, my child. May the Lord bless you and keep you safe always!" breathed Roland, as he folded her to his heart and kissed her—even as he had been accustomed to do when he was a little lad and she was a baby.

And so the interview ended.

CHAPTER XXI

COUNTRY VISITORS

Capt. Grandiere and Rosemary left the Old Capitol prison by the way they had entered it, and bent their steps toward Pennsylvania Avenue, and thence toward their hotel.

The old skipper went upstairs with Rosemary, to ask after Mrs. Force.

They found all the young people of their party still in the drawing room.

Mr. Force was up another flight of stairs in the room next to that of his sick wife.

Lieut. Force had returned to his ship.

Odalite, Wynnette and Elva were seated about the room, trying to work at their flower embroidery and conversing at intervals in hushed voices.

"Well! And how is the mother by this time?" cheerily inquired the captain, with a view to encourage the daughters.

"Dr. Bolton has just made a second visit, and says that she will do well, if not disturbed," replied Odalite.

"Thank Heaven! I hope she will be all right in a day or two!" exclaimed Grandiere, heartily, as he threw himself into a big armchair and dropped his hat between his feet.

"How did you leave Roland?" inquired Wynnette.

"Perfectly well, as to his bodily health. He inquired after you all, and sent his respects to you."

"How does he take his arrest and imprisonment?—that is what I meant," said Wynnette.

"Bravely and patiently, as should a man with a good conscience," replied the captain.

"You can prove that he was a prisoner among the pirates, and not a comrade of their crew?" said Wynnette.

"I can swear that he was their prisoner," replied the old man.

"And, of course, that will clear him," said Wynnette, conclusively.

The old skipper did not contradict her.

Perhaps he might have done so, however, if at that moment the door had not opened to admit a waiter, who

brought a handful of cards that he held together like an open fan.

Before he could deliver them a group of laughing visitors passed him and entered the room.

Rosemary made a dart at the group, exclaiming:

"Mother! Oh, mother!"

She was caught in the arms of Mrs. Dorothy Hedge and covered with tears and kisses, while the three other girls rushed upon Miss Susannah Grandiere, and the old skipper trotted across the room and shook hands with his grandnephew Sam, who was the only member of the visiting party left for him.

The words that followed on all sides were at first rather incoherent, as such greetings after such partings are apt to be.

"We followed up the fellow who brought up our tickets. Fancy our staying downstairs to wait for him to go and come! So as he insisted on taking our tickets first and handed us blank ones and a pencil, I wrote all our names down and let him take them, but we followed close behind the tickets!" said Mr. Sam Grandiere.

"Cards, dear Sam! Cards!" whispered Wynnette.

"How is it that you are not in the army?" inquired Capt. Grandiere.

"Because somebody had to stay home to plow and sow and look after the family," replied the young man.

"And so you never volunteered, and you bought a substitute when you were drafted?"

"I never volunteered because my father and brother were both in the army, and because, as I said before, somebody had to stay home and look after the crops. And I never was drafted; if I had been I should have gone in, because I could not have found it in my conscience to tempt any poor fellow with money to go and get shot in my place. No, if I had been drafted I should have gone."

"Right, my boy! Right! Right! Right!" exclaimed his uncle, heartily.

"And how are all here?" inquired Miss Susannah Grandiere, when at length all were seated.

"You see us all here except papa and mamma. Papa is well, but mamma——" Here the speaker, Odalite, paused as the tears choked her voice.

Miss Grandiere looked from one to the other of the family party in mute, though anxious inquiry.

"Mrs. Force was taken suddenly ill this morning," said the old captain, speaking for his friends. "No! now don't be alarmed! The doctor, who has just left her, says that she is doing well, and will be all right if kept quiet!" he added, to soothe the uneasiness of the visitors.

"But what is the matter with her?" inquired Mrs. Hedge.

"She had a severe shock, and fell into a swoon. She has been lying prostrate, but quiet, ever since. Now, don't be alarmed; there is no danger."

"But what sort of a shock?" inquired Miss Grandiere.

"Susannah, you were always inquisitor-general. Mrs. Force heard suddenly that a friend of ours, young Roland Bayard, had been taken prisoner under exceptional circumstances."

"What circumstances?" persisted the inquisitor.

The old skipper heaved a deep sigh, and as briefly as he could, told the story of Roland's double capture, first by the *Argente,* that took the *Kitty,* and afterward by the *Eagle,* that took the *Argente,* and he added, without reserve, the circumstances of Capt. Silver's alleged claim upon Roland, which sealed the lips of the latter.

"Roland the pirate's son! Why, he is no more Silver's son than he is mine!" exclaimed young Sam.

"But, now tell us how it was that you found us so soon?"

"Well," said Sam, 'to begin at the beginning: On Monday morning we got your telegram saying that you had all arrived safe, and that Uncle Gideon was along with you, and you would be with us in a few days. Naturally we were all rejoiced and we waited for you. But on Wednesday morning we got the New York papers, telling all about the capture of the *Argente* by the *Eagle,* and the arrival of the *Argente* under command of Lieut. Force, and of the prize being ordered to the navy yard here!"

"And it did not need one to rise from the dead to reveal the fact that we should all come directly to this city to meet Le!" put in Wynnette.

"No, it didn't!" assented Sam.

"And so I offered to come up and see you. And Aunt Dolly and Aunt Sukey said they would come, too. So I harnessed the two strongest draft horses to the old carryall, and we set out yesterday morning. We got as far as Horsehead last night, and put up there for the night. This morning we started early, and reached the city about noon. First, like a fool, I drove my party to your sometime house at the West End. Found it was all turned into public offices. Then we went the rounds of the hotels and now at last we have found you."

"Good boy!" exclaimed Wynnette.

"But have you found rooms?" anxiously inquired the old skipper.

"No. Our carryall is at the door. We came here to call first, but we also hoped that we would be able to put up here," said Sam.

"Indeed, I hope you may," said the old skipper; "but the dearest thing in Washington at the present time is space! If I had a room to myself I would offer it to these ladies, but I have only a single bed in a double-bedded room."

"But, at any rate, you will order your carriage around

to the livery stable and spend the day with us. That will give Mr. Grandiere time to see about your rooms, here or elsewhere," said Odalite to the two elder ladies, who were seated on the sofa, with Rosemary between them, with each of her little hands clasped one in each of theirs.

"Yes, my dear, thank you, we will spend the day," announced Mrs. Hedge, for her party.

"Come up now and lay off your wraps," said Rosemary, leading the way to what, in party parlance, was now called the room.

"Uncle," inquired Sam Grandiere, very anxiously, "are matters really serious with Roland Bayard?"

"So serious, my lad, that I fear for the worst. Unless he can be disabused of this idea that Silver has impressed upon him—that he is the pirate's own son—he will never be induced to give the testimony that will convict that pirate and vindicate himself."

"If Miss Sibby Bayard were only here; she might be of use at this time," mused Sam, aloud.

"Miss Sibby Bayard is here, you bet! Talk of the devil and you know what follows," said a voice on the threshold, and the form of the lady in question appeared at the door. "When a thing is got to be done, sez I, the sooner the better, sez I! And so here I am, good folks."

CHAPTER XXII

NEW HOPE

"Miss Sibby!" exclaimed the assembled party, in one breath, as they all arose to welcome her.

"Oh, yes!" said the good woman, after she had shaken hands all around, and had sunk breathless into the near-

est easy-chair. "It is all mighty fine to cry out 'Miss Sibby,' as if you were overjoled at the sight of me; but deeds speak louder than words, sez I. And them as runs away to the city and leave me behind, sez I, and then pretends to be glad to see me, sez I, is nothing but 'sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal,' sez I. Yes, it's you I mean, Sam Grandiere!"

"But, Miss Sibby, I didn't run away and leave you, ma'am," pleaded the young fellow.

"And plenty of room in the carryall, too, as might have incommodated me very well. The old saying sez as 'Where there is a will there is a way,' and I sez, correspondimentally, sez I, 'where there is a way, sez I, there out to be a will,' sez I. Yes! I'm talking to you, Sam Grandiere. You had the way to take me, but you hadn't got the will."

"Indeed, Miss Sibby, I didn't know you wanted to come. I should have been glad enough to take you."

"Why didn't you ask me, then? You might a knowed, soon as the news reached our neighborhood as all the folks had come back from furrin parts, and Gideon Grandiere among 'em, as I would want to come up and hear news of my lad. But you run away and left me behind. And when I found it out I just said to myself, sez I, I'll just harness up my old mule, sez I, and I won't be long behind 'em, sez I. And so here I am."

"How did you find us out?" inquired Capt. Grandiere.

"In the funniest way as ever you see. As I was a-driving slowly up the Pennsylwany Avenue who should I see but that dog, Joshua, a-walking as majestical down the street as if the whole city belonged to him. I knowed him at once, and naterally looked to see who was along of him. And then who should I see but that nigger a-walking down the street behind the dog as if the whole country belonged to him, if you please. So I

stopped the mule and hollered to him. And the wust of hollering after anybody on Pennsylwany Avenue is that everybody in hearing thinks as you're hollering after them. So everybody had to turn and look at me and my mule. And the nigger stood and stared. And I had to holler after him again to ax him where his master was a-putting up. And he come to the side of the cart and told me, and axed me to let him get in and drive me to the hotel, 'cause, he said, every one was a-staring at me."

"And so Dickson drove you here, did he, ma'am?" inquired the old skipper.

"He did. But as for the people staring at me, sez I to that nigger, if I am a show, I'm a free show, sez I, and it will cost 'em nothing, sez I, and it ain't often as the poor white trash in the city gets a good chance to stare at the descendant of the great duke, sez I, and you may lay your life on that, sez I. So that nigger got in and drove the mule, and Joshua marched behind as solemn as a funeral procession. And so we got here. And now how is my boy? My adopted neffy? And where is he?"

"Roland is in good health. He is at present—ahem! —living on Capitol Hill," answered the old salt, who was unwilling at this juncture to enter into explanations with Miss Sibby as to Roland's real state.

"And why isn't the boy staying here with you all?" inquired the old lady.

"Oh, he—there is no room here. We are fearfully crowded. The four young ladies have to sleep two in a bed, in a double-bedded room."

"That's ruinous to health. Why don't you all go to some other hotel?"

"Because they are all more crowded than this."

"Then what am I to do?"

"Oh, Sam and I are going out to hunt for lodgings

now. We have to find lodgings for my two nieces and nephew. We will hunt up a place for you also. Of course, you will stay here to-day."

"It is perfectly dreadful! If I had a knowed all this I'd a-never have left home. I had room enough to turn round in there, anyways. When people's well off, sez I, they ought to be content, sez I. But how is Abel Force and his wife and Odalite? I don't see any of 'em round."

"Mrs. Force is not well, and Mr. Force is with her, I believe. Odalite went to show my two nieces to a room to take off their things," discreetly answered the old sailor.

"What's the matter along of Elfrida Force?"

"Well—she—— I really don't know. Not much, I hope."

"I know. It's trotting around so much. There's where it is. When people gets to be past their prime, sez I, they ought to take care of what's left of them, sez I. 'Dancing bears,' sez I, 'must pay for their airs,' sez I."

"What sort of a time have you had since the war began, Miss Sibby?" inquired the old salt, with a view to take the visitor off dangerous ground.

But he "fell from the frying pan into the fire."

The old lady's face flushed, and her eyes snapped.

"Don't ask me what sort of a time I've had! Old Scratch's own time! What with being raided by first one party and then another, I have hardly a sheep or a pig or a duck or a hen left on the place. And what with being called a rebel by the Unioners and a traitor by the Confederers, I have hardly a morsel of self-respect or Christian charity left in my heart. And I haven't a bit of respect for either party—not I! Clapper-clawing each other like a pack o' wild cats for nothing in this world, as I can see, 'less it is because they haven't got

no furriners to clapper-claw. If free people can't live peaceable in a free, healthy, plentiful country, sez I, the sooner they get the Turkey of Constantinople to rule over them the better, sez I."

"You seem to be excited, Miss Sibby."

"So would you be excited if you had suffered all that I have. First comes the Unioners and carries off all my pigs, and calls me a rebel because I object. And then comes the Confederers and carries off all my fowls, and calls me a traitor because I don't see the right of it. Unioners and Confederers! I calls 'em Blue Bottle Flies and Gray Back Bugs, I do!"

"Oh, Miss Sibby!"

"Well, then, I do! I hain't no patience with neither party! A cutting and a slashing at each other like Injuns! Only last week a lot of Blue Bottles come riding up and searched the house after a spy—as if I would harbor a spy!—and after eating up and drinking up everything in the house, and putting me in fear of my life, they mounted and rode away, telling me 'to take care of myself'! 'Take care of myself,' indeed; after scaring me almost to death."

"Oh, Miss Sibby! I am afraid you are no——"

Whatever he was going to say was cut short by the sudden opening of the door, and the reëntrance of Odalite Force, escorting Mrs. Hedge and Miss Grandiere.

"You here, Miss Sibby?" exclaimed the three ladies, in a breath.

"What the Blue Bottles and the Gray Backs has left of me is here, as you see," replied Miss Bayard, rising to receive the welcome of the new arrivals.

"And now, Sam, my boy, we will go out hunting lodgings; and if we can't find them in the city we will even go a little way into the country," said the old skipper, as he arose and bowed himself out of the room, followed by his nephew.

When they had gone, Lord Enderby, who had been left out of the talk, now fancied himself out of place. So he likewise arose and bowed himself out.

When the half dozen women were left in the parlor, they drew their chairs together and fell into a confidential talk.

Miss Sibby inquired more particularly into the nature of Mrs. Force's illness; and Wynnette, with her brusque frankness, told the truth—that the shock of hearing of Roland Bayard's arrest and imprisonment, under the charge of piracy, had made the lady ill.

Miss Sibby just stared with incredulous amazement.

"Roland Bayard! My Roland—charged with piracy? Why, it is all a funny mistake, you know, that must soon be set right! And that old gay deceiver, Gideon Grandiere, to go and tell me that he was boarding on Capitol Hill, when he was in prison there! What did he do it for? Was he afeared of scaring me about my own Roland? Why, Lor', sez I, when I know my boy is innocent, sez I, I know his innocence is gwine to shine forth like the sun at midday, sez I, and make his accusers ashamed, sez I."

Here it was felt to be right Miss Sibby should be told of the real state of the case. And so she had to hear all about the taking of the *Kitty* by the *Argente;* when the skipper and his mate were made prisoners by the pirate, who set the former at liberty on the coast of Cornwall, and kept the latter a captive on board the *Argente;* and then of the capture of the *Argente* by the *Eagle,* and the bringing of the prize into port with the pirate captain and his first officer on board; and, finally, the identification of the two prisoners as Angus Anglesea, alias Capt. Silver, and Roland Bayard, alias Craven Cloud; and the alleged partenal claim of the former upon the latter, which now closed the lips of the claimed son from saving himself by testifying against the self-styled father.

Miss Sibby's eyes opened, her brows raised, and her chin dropped in sheer horrified amazement.

"Why, them's all lies!" she indignantly exclaimed. "Abel Force knows they're lies! Why don't he go and tell the boy better? As to that Anglesea a-turning out to be no Anglesea at all, no English gentleman at all, and no military officer at all, but just a pirate, after being a thief and a forger, I'm not a bit surprised at that. No more would I be surprised if he was found out to be Old Scratch himself, allowed to come on earth in the human form in these very bad times. But as for anything going amiss with my boy on account of his being stuffed with lies about that pirate being of his own father, it shan't be done! Me and Abel Force will put a stop to that! Abel Force knows who that boy's father is; and I have my suspicions. There shan't be a hair of his head hurt! Mind that!" said the old lady, shaking her head.

"Oh, Miss Sibby!" pleaded little Rosemary, clasping her hands prayerfully, and raising her large blue eyes to the speaker's face. "Can you—will you—save Roland?"

"Abel Force can, and he will, or I'll know the reason why!" replied Miss Bayard.

For hours longer the conversation ran on Roland Bayard and the net of circumstances that had caught him in this perilous false position.

They were still talking when the two gentlemen returned, and reported that they had found comfortable lodgings for the travelers, who might take possession of their new quarters that evening.

"Where is Abel Force?" inquired the captain, as they all went down to luncheon.

"Papa sent word down that he did not need luncheon, but would join us at dinner in the evening," replied Odalite.

And they began the meal.

And meanwhile where was Abel Force?

CHAPTER XXIII

TOO GREAT A BURDEN

Abel Force went into the little room he had engaged, adjoining the sick chamber of his wife.

It was no more than a closet, and had evidently been used as a dressing room attached to the large chamber before the exigencies of war had rendered space in the house too valuable for the little place to be used for any purpose but a bedroom.

It was furnished very simply, with an iron bedstead, a washstand with a glass above it, a single chair, and half a dozen wooden pegs on the door to hang clothes.

Mr. Force turned the back of the only chair to the window that was opposite the door and overlooked the yard; and he sat down and drew the packet he had taken from his wife's room, and again looked at the superscription.

Yes, it was directed in a firm hand to:

"Abel Force, Esq."

It was tied up with cord and sealed with wax.

But under the cord a little note had been slipped, and this also was addressed—but in a weak and tremulous hand—to:

"Abel Force, Esq."

He opened the note to read it. It was without date; yet he felt sure that it must have been written on that very morning before the sudden fall of the woman had prevented her flight.

The note ran as follows:

"The hour has come when I must drop the mask of deceit and show myself in my true colors—a living lie, a hypocrite, though never, never happy in falsehood and hypocrisy. Your love and trust have wounded and tortured me; the reverence of children has humiliated me. No, never for a moment happy or at ease in my disguise. It is almost a relief now to throw it off and reveal myself as I am, even though the revelation must banish me from your presence and my children's forever in this world, and perhaps in the next. Yet, I repeat, it is a relief to throw off the disguise which has suffocated me like a heavy cloak these many years; and has been more than that—has been like Medea's robe of fire for the last few years since Anglesea's first visit to us.

"The inclosed packet contains a manuscript that was written at intervals during this time, and with a view to the chance of just such a crisis as has now come. I leave it for you to read. I do not ask you to pardon me, for I know there is no such thing as pardon for me in this world. I do not even ask you to judge charitably of me—charity is for the sinner, not for the hypocrite. I only ask you to read the story that you may understand the fiendish hold one human being had upon my body, soul and spirit—my very life here and hereafter; and, after having read it, I, who have no right to ask you anything, dare still to ask you this—to ask, to plead, to pray that you will be kind to one who is the guiltless victim of others' guilt, and to save him, if you can. And now, farewell! And oh! my whole heart goes out in this cry. Oh, God! Oh, God! though I cannot be pardoned—yet, oh! hear my prayer, and save and bless my husband and my children!"

That was all.

Abel Force dropped his head upon his breast, and remained in deep thought for a few moments. Then, with

a heavy sigh, he aroused himself, drew a match case from his pocket, lighted a match, set fire to the little note and held it down upon the stone window sill, with the point of his penknife, until it was consumed to ashes.

Then he went to lock his door, to prevent intrusion; but he found that he had already taken that precaution.

Finally, he returned to his chair, cut the cords of the packet, broke the seal, and read as follows:

"THE STORY OF A WITHERED HEART

"You have often heard how lonely, loveless and neglected was my childhood and youth. You are reminded of these facts now, not in excuse of what followed, but as the causes of the effects that destroyed my life.

"You know that I was born at Enderby Castle, where the first years of my infancy passed.

"When I was scarcely four years of age I lost my mother—too young to understand or to lament my loss. The pageantry of her funeral is one of the strongest impressions among the brain pictures of that time.

"A few days after that event my father left Enderby, taking me with him.

"We went to Weirdwaste, an estate he had acquired through his marriage with my mother, situated on the west coast of Ireland. It was, if possible, even more drear, lonely and desolate than Enderby Cliff itself.

"This place, in which I was destined to pass my childhood, was built of gray stone, two stories high, around the four sides of a hollow quadrangle, at the inland end of a long, flat point of land stretching far out into the Atlantic Ocean, which at high tide swept over it, covering more than two-thirds of the ground; and the moan of the sea never ceased from the sorrowful shore. North, west and south around the point of land nothing but sky and water was to be seen. East—inland—was a

wild waste, dotted here and there by the huts of the poorest peasantry on the island, and that means, also, the poorest people on the earth.

"The old manor house was shockingly out of repair, but because it was the best building on the estate it was occupied by my father's land steward, O'Nally, and his wife.

"These two had been old servants of my mother's family, and had been very much devoted to her.

"After my father's arrival with me at the house they also acted in the capacity of butler and housekeeper.

"My father had brought with him a valet and a groom, and for me a nurse and a governess.

"I was very warmly welcomed and fondly caressed by my mother's old servants, and so for the first few days I was very happy at Weirdwaste.

"We had no neighbors but the poor tenantry in the huts, on the waste behind the manor house.

"And we saw no company but the vicar of the little Protestant parish, in the village of Bantrim, ten miles inland, and the county practitioner from the same place.

"These two old men remain strong, clear portraits in the gallery of my memory.

"The vicar, Mr. Clement, was a large, fair, clean-shaved, bald-headed old gentleman, with blue eyes and a beaming smile. He was very, very good to me, and I soon learned to love him.

"The medical practitioner, Dr. Alexander, was a tall, gaunt, high-nosed, red-faced man, with a shock of iron-gray hair and whiskers; a formidable frown and a brusque manner. He also was very, very kind to me, but I never got over my fear of him.

"My father did not intend to remain at Weirdwaste, as I soon found out. He had the vicar and doctor come and spend the day and dine at the house, so that they

might see the child who was to be left at Weirdwaste under their joint care.

"The doctor pronounced me a wonderfully sound and healthy child, who would grow finely in the pure, invigorating air of the seaside. The doctor promised to look after my health, and the vicar to superintend my education. And both engaged to write frequently and keep my father advised as to my welfare.

"So, having taken every precaution he thought necessary to my well-being, and having settled the urgent business that brought him to Ireland, my father bade me good-by, and left Weirdwaste to travel on the Continent.

"And then began the loneliest life ever led by motherless child.

"O'Nally and his wife were an old couple. They kept two old servants—a woman, who did the housework; and a man, who did the outdoor work. And they kept an old horse and an old jaunting car.

"My nurse was a respectable, elderly matron; my governess, a discreet, middle-aged maiden, selected by my father especially for good qualities. Surely I had all the care and protection that was needed. But I had no love, no play, no amusement, no companions. Even the warm-hearted peasant women, who had come down from their huts on the waste to welcome their little lady of the manor, came no more after that first day—not that they had ceased to care for me, but because the occasion of their coming had passed, and their hard work kept them all at home.

"On fine Sundays O'Nally took me in the jaunting car, with himself and his wife, to church, and we heard Mr. Clement preach, and after the service I sometimes got a pat on the head, and a smile and kind word from the vicar. He was a widower without children, so I never was asked to his house.

"Once a week the county practitioner rode out to the manor house to see after my health, that he might report to my father. Also, if no one from Weirdwaste happened to go to church on a Sunday, the vicar would ride out to the manor in the course of the week to inquire the cause of absence, and report to my father.

"These occasional drives to church on Sundays, and semi-occasional visits from the vicar and the doctor, were the only variations in the monotony of my days, which were ordinarily passed in this way.

"At seven o'clock in the morning, Nurse Burns would wake me up, give me a bath, and dress me in such a plain black frock! I had not even the pleasure of pretty clothes! And then she would give me my breakfast—such a plain breakfast of oatmeal and milk! I had never the indulgence of cakes or sugar plums, which was all very well for me, no doubt, but which was also very dull. Then came Miss Murray with the school books, and I would sit alone with her in the schoolroom, trying to study my first reader, while she sat reading or sewing, but scarcely ever speaking.

"Then came the noon dinner of boiled mutton and potatoes.

"And after that more school for an hour or two.

"Then a walk on the sands, all around the point, if the tide was low; or, if the tide were high and the cape covered with water, we took a walk on the waste behind the manor house.

"Sometimes I got a letter from my father, inclosed in one to the steward or to my governess."

CHAPTER XXIV

A NEW MOTHER

"One day I received a terrible shock. Child as I was, I felt it severely. It came so suddenly, so unexpectedly, that it fell like a thunderbolt upon me.

"It was a morning in November when the carrier's cart stopped at the manor house, and left a box directed to me, in the care of the steward.

"When it was opened, it revealed a beautiful cake wrapped in many folds of silver paper. I was delighted, for I had not tasted cake for months.

"But, oh! I did not taste it even then! The letter that lay on the top of the cake poisoned it.

"That letter told me that my father had married and was spending his honeymoon in Paris. I had a stepmother! A being whom, I knew not how, or why, unless perhaps from the idle talk of servants, I had learned to hate as an evil and to dread as an enemy—though it never occurred to me that my father would give me one. And yet he had married within five months after my mother's death.

"I could not touch the poisoned cake! I know not what became of it.

"I cried all that day and many days after. The steward and his wife and the two old servants who had known and loved and served my mother, encouraged me with their sympathy and lamentations to yield to my grief and despair; but the governess frowned upon me and lectured me upon my duty to my parents, as it was her business to do—only it seemed to me cruel in her.

"As days passed my passionate grief subsided.

"My father did not bring his bride to Weirdwaste, which was, indeed, no fit place to bring a fine lady.

Nor did he send for me to join them wherever they might be.

"He heard regularly from me through the doctor, the vicar, the steward, or my governess. And he seemed to be content with my condition.

"So the year passed away. I was thankful to my father for one thing—that he did not bring my stepmother and myself together.

"This was all wrong, but I did not know it then. I was unconsciously influenced by the sentiments of my own mother's own old servants who were about me, and who, whenever Miss Murray was out of sight, would commiserate with me on the subject of my stepmother, and then rejoice with me on the fact that no future heir to Enderby that might be born of the second marriage, could deprive me of my inheritance of Weirdwaste, which was mine in right of my own mother.

"Ah me! Enderby Castle and Weirdwaste sounded well enough in the peerage, but in point of fact the united rent roll of both places did not reach over a thousand pounds per annum, and my father, for his rank, was a very poor man.

"I expected to see my father at Christmas. He wrote to the steward to say that he would come and bring Lady Enderby with him, and that the house must be made as comfortable as possible for her reception; and that the suit of rooms pointing south must be fitted up for her especial use.

"This letter filled my soul with dismay. I could have looked forward with delight to the visit of my father, had he been coming alone; but I could only dread the meeting with my stepmother.

"However, both the pleasure and the pain were saved me, for after the servants had got the house ready for the reception of my father and his new wife, there came another letter saying that the delicate health of Lady

Enderby obliged him to take her to Italy for the winter. And in place of my father and stepmother's visit, came a box of presents.

"I was again divided in my feelings—sorry not to see my father, glad not to see my stepmother.

"The Christmas box was a large and well-filled one, packed with flannels and blankets, and tea and sugar for the old women in the huts on the waste, and containing another smaller box with cakes, sweetmeats and sugar plums for me and my small household.

"I heard the steward remark to his wife that the new countess must be well off, or the earl must have come into money some way, for this was the very first Christmas that he had ever sent anything to the poor on the estate. As the guardian of his daughter, the heiress, he forgave many of them their rent, but he never helped them in any other way. And so at Christmas the old people on the waste were made happy. And now let me add here that as long as I remained at the old manor house this Christmas dole came every year.

"After this I heard less of the cruelty of my father in afflicting me with a stepmother. I heard even less of the wickedness of stepmothers in general and the probable enormity of my stepmother in particular.

"The old people from the waste came down in crowds to the manor house on Christmas Day to thank me for the dole that had been sent to them on Christmas Eve. This was the only pleasure we had. There was no merrymaking, and the state of the roads prevented us even from going to church.

"Oh, the dreary winter that followed! No one came to the house except the vicar and the doctor, who made weekly calls to report to my father. And we went nowhere at all. That was my first winter at Weirdwaste. And here let me add that all succeeding winters were like that.

"I had no companions, no amusements, no occupations except my schoolbooks and my piano. I had not even a pet bird, or cat, or dog.

"The steward and his wife were good to me, but they were engaged in their affairs. Miss Murray was faithful, but when she was not hearing my lessons, or guiding my fingers over the keys of the piano, she was busied in reading. I never knew anybody to read so much as she did. She had no other recreation.

"When the spring returned we began to take walks on the sand again when the tide was out; and we drove to church on Sundays when the state of the roads permitted us.

"On the first of August we received news from my father. He was at Enderby Castle, to which he had taken my stepmother for a temporary sojourn. He wrote to the steward to tell him that an heir had been born to Enderby; and he wrote to me to say that my new mother had given me a dear little brother, and that he hoped I would love them both very much.

"I was not quite four years old when my own dear mother died. I was but a few weeks past five now when I was told that I had a little brother by my father's new wife, and that I must love both.

"I could not do it. You will see what a sensitive and badly trained child I was when I tell you that I fell into hysterical sobs and tears, and refused to be comforted. It seemed to me that I had quite lost my father—that he had been taken away from me by the new woman and the new child. I remember crying aloud to my own mother in heaven to come and take me away, because no one cared for me on earth.

"Miss Murray coaxed, lectured, remonstrated, all in vain. I would not hear reason or receive consolation.

"The two O'Nallys and the two old servants sympathized with me, and petted me, and cried over me.

They never said a word against my father or my stepmother, personally or in my presence; but I often overheard them saying it was 'a burning shame to neglect a child as I was neglected; that I ought to be with my father and stepmother, wherever they were,' etc., etc. And their words deepened in me the sense of injury I felt.

"And yet, in justice to my father and his wife, I must say that no wrong was intended me. We were all the victims of circumstances, as you will judge as I go on.

"It was on this occasion that I wrote my first letter to my father, with much help from my governess.

"As soon as I had got over my paroxysms of grief, which did not happen for days, Miss Murray insisted that I should answer my father's letter and wish him joy of his heir, and send my love to my new mother and little brother.

"This I most positively refused to do, declaring, with a new burst of tears, that I did not wish him any joy in his son; that I did not love my new brother, and that I had no new mother. I had but one mother, who was in heaven, and I should never have another.

"My governess insisted, and tried to intimidate me into compliance. Whereupon I told her that she should not wish to make me write falsehoods, and that for my part I was quite ready to be burned at the stake, like Bishop Bonner, for the truth's sake, rather than write what I did not feel and what was not true.

"You see from this what a morbid, sensitive, extravagant little soul I was even at that tender age, and what exaggerated views I took of every trial.

"My governess had to yield the point. How could she even wish her pupil to write falsely? We compromised the matter by my consenting to write a short note to my father, telling him that I was glad to hear

that he was well, and asking him when he would come to see me.

"A week later I got a most affectionate letter from my father, saying that he would visit his 'dear little daughter' as soon as he thought it would be safe to leave his wife, who had lain in a low condition ever since the arrival of her babe.

"But my father did not come.

"It was, in fact, October before the countess was able to leave her room. Then her physicians ordered her to the south of France, whither my father soon took her, with her infant son.

"Another dreary winter followed me at Weirdwaste. The same confinement to the house, without companions, or amusements, or occupations—except my elderly attendants and my schoolbooks and music. No visitors except the vicar and the doctor. No visits except to church on exceptional Sundays when the roads were passable. I grew into a very strange child, precocious in a certain sort of intelligence gained from books, but backward in all knowledge of child life and depressed in spirits.

"I received occasional letters from my father, and wrote others, touched up by my governess."

CHAPTER XXV

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

"It was not until the next June, when we had been parted nearly two years, that I saw my father again.

"He came over suddenly and dropped down on us, so to speak, on the morning of the fifth of that month.

"Steward and housekeeper were both 'taken aback'

and 'flustered,' as they described themselves; yet they were not unprepared. The house was always as well kept as the circumstances would permit.

"Nor was Miss Murray. She also had done her duty and could present her pupil without fear of criticism.

"We were both in the schoolroom, my governess and I, when the door opened and some one entered unannounced. I looked up from my slate, to see a tall, stately man, with a pale face framed in black hair and black whiskers, standing in the doorway.

"I recognized my father and flew to his embrace, before Miss Murray could rise to receive him with deliberate decorum.

"My father kissed me with much love and received Miss Murray's greetings with stately politeness.

"Later on, when I had recovered from my surprise and excitement at his sudden appearance, he explained that he had but lately returned to England and had taken his delicate wife and child to London, which was then, in the fine June days, at the height of the fashionable season, and had left them on a visit to his mother-in-law, the Dowager Lady Burnshot, who had a fine house near Hyde Park; and that he had seized this first opportunity to run to Ireland to see his dear little daughter.

"He further explained that he could not bring the countess and the little viscount because she could not bear the sea air yet.

"He brought me a doll and a doll's set of furniture, all of which delighted me almost as much as his visit, for—will it be believed?—I had not possessed a doll since the death of my own mother, and I was only six years old.

"My father remained only a few days at Weirdwaste, during which he invited the vicar and the doctor to dine and talk with him over the affairs of the estate, and the

condition of my health, to thank them for their past kindness, and to ask their continued supervision of his daughter's welfare.

"'I cannot take her with me to London at present,' he said, 'for we are visiting at the house of Lady Burnshot, the mother of my wife. Besides, I think, for her own sake, little Elfrida is much better here for a few years longer.'

"The doctor and the vicar agreed with my father, that I was much better off at Weirdwaste than I could be in London. And so there was no more to be said.

"My father took a very loving leave of me at the end of the week.

"After he was gone I grieved myself sick! I loved him so dearly! I longed to go with him so ardently.

"But it was not to be.

"Why do I linger over these details? Is it because we all grow garrulous when talking or writing of our childhood? Or is it because I dread to approach the period of my life's tragedy? Or do both these causes combine to influence me? I know not; but I know that I must hurry toward that from which I shrink.

"A few weeks after this, being in the heat of summer, my father came again to see me, bringing my stepmother and my little baby brother with him.

"He had written to apprise us of the visit, so we were all ready for him. All the animosity I had ever felt against my stepmother vanished when I saw her pale, patient face. My child heart pitied her, and from pity I loved her; and did everything in my small power to please her; except this—I would not call her mother. I said it would not be right toward my own dear mother, who was in heaven. And she kissed me, and said she only was sorry she had not been able to do a mother's part by her motherless child, for that she, too, would soon be in heaven, where she would meet my own

mother, when she could only tell her that she loved, but had not been able to serve, her daughter.

"As for my infant brother, now a year old, I idolized him. His mother delighted in my affection for her child.

" 'I have not been able to be good to you, my poor little girl; but you will be good to him when I am gone, will you not?' she inquired.

" 'Indeed, indeed, I will. I will love him better than myself. I will die for him,' I said, taking the extravagant view and using the exaggerated language that was usual with me.

"The chills of autumn come very early at Weirdwaste, and so about the middle of September, when the evenings began to be cold, my father took my stepmother and my baby brother back and settled them for a few weeks at Torquay, then believed to be the best winter resort in England.

"I grieved after them for a week or more. And, oh! how I wondered why they could not take me with them!

"The reason was this, as I afterward learned: that the state of Lady Enderby's health made it impossible for me to be with them, especially in a lodging house.

"My father did not visit Weirdwaste again for a long time. He spent the winter with his wife and infant son at Torquay, and in the early summer took them to Switzerland, and in autumn to the Grecian Archipelago. In fact, two more years passed before I saw my father again.

"Then it was June and the height of the London season, and he had brought his wife to London and left her on a visit to her mother, the Baroness Burnshot. But on this occasion he brought my little brother over to Ireland and down to Weirdwaste.

"The child was now called Viscount Glennon, and was a beautiful boy nearly three years old.

"I was at that time a little old woman of eight. All the years that I have lived and all the sorrows that I have suffered have never made me as old as I was at eight.

"But again my heart leaped to meet father and brother, and I loved and adored them. I asked why my stepmother had not come with them. My father told me that she was much too frail to bear the sea air even in summer.

"He was satisfied with my health, and with my progress in learning, and so he left us, taking the boy with him.

"I had now been more than four years at dreary Weirdwaste, and had not known any home but the old manor house, or any society than its inmates. As these first four years passed so passed the next seven.

"My father came about once a year to see me, bringing my brother with him. He always spent a week at Weirdwaste, and then returned to England, taking my brother with him.

"His time was entirely devoted to his invalid wife, whose life seemed only to be prolonged by his incessant care.

"They were always moving from place to place, as the seasons changed—in Switzerland, or in Norway, or Sweden in the summer; in the south of France, in Italy, or among the isles of the Grecian Archipelago in winter. Sometimes in the finest weather of the early summer they came to London, during which time the countess would visit her mother, and then my father would take my little brother and come on a flying visit to me.

"So the years went on until I reached my fifteenth year, when the days of my dark destiny drew near."

CHAPTER XXVI

BRIGHTON YEARS AGO

"You may never have occasion to read these lines, yet I come to my task from time to time to prepare them for you.

"Let me resume:

"I never was reconciled to my lonely life at Weirdwaste, but as the years passed on, and I grew toward womanhood the solitude and monotony of my surroundings pressed more and more heavily upon my health and spirits.

"My father in these years seemed almost to have forgotten me. He was with my mother on one of the islands of the Grecian Archipelago—for her health. My little brother—now a well-grown schoolboy—was at Rugby. You see, our family of four was scattered.

"About this time my health and spirits became so seriously affected that Dr. Alexander thought it necessary to call my father's attention to the fact. He wrote to him, and in due time received an answer.

"It was something to this effect:

" 'As you recommend the south coast, you will please take the girl to Brighton, and take suitable lodgings for herself and her attendants. As she is no longer a child she must have more advanced teachers. Miss Murray may be retained as her companion or chaperon, but a French governess must be engaged for her.

" 'I leave all this to you. Our good vicar will be able to assist you.

" 'My son will join his sister at the seaside for the midsummer holidays. Draw on me for the necessary funds.'

"The prospect of any change filled my soul with delightful anticipations.

"It was now the middle of June. By the first of July I was established in delightful lodgings on the King's Road, facing the sea.

"We had the whole of the first floor, consisting of a suit of eight rooms—drawing room, dining room, schoolroom, bathroom and four bedrooms.

"I was delighted with the gay vision of life and motion all around me; there seemed to be a perpetual gala.

"The splendor of the view from my front windows was not all the splendor of sea and sky; it was fleets of gayly decked craft, of all sizes and shapes, from the queenly yacht to the pretty little rowboats; and the pier, with its bazaars of toys, trinkets and jewelry; the bathing houses, the frolicsome children in the surf or on the sands, the brilliant crowds on the esplanade, the bands of music, the magnificent shops, with displays of sumptuous fabrics and splendid jewels, not to be surpassed in those of Paris or Constantinople.

"In fact, to me, who had never been in a town before —to me, coming from lonely and dreary Weirdwaste— Brighton was a dazzling, bewildering scene of light, life, gayety, splendor and magnificence.

"And if it was all this viewed only from the front windows of my lodgings, what was it, let me ask you, afterward, when my schoolboy brother and his friends came, full of high spirits, to make the most of our opportunities?

"On the second day after our installment at our lodgings we were joined by the French governess who had been engaged for me.

"She was a small, dark, middle-aged woman, with black hair, and sharp, black eyes. Her name was De la Champe—Madame de la Champe. Her last place

had been in the service of a duchess, whose last daughter having just been married, madame found herself under the necessity of seeking a new engagement, and had found one through the vicar's answer to her advertisement.

"I did not like her, though she came so highly recommended. But my prejudice against the Frenchwoman was not the slightest drawback to my intense enjoyment of my new and delightful surroundings.

"On the fourth day after our arrival we were joined by my brother and his friend. My brother was then a bright lad of twelve, looking older than his years, because he was really a very precocious boy. He greeted me with the warmest affection, and promised me a 'jolly old time.' His friend was Angus Anglesea, a young man eight years his senior, who, however. had formed a strong attachment for the bright lad, and taken him under his protection.

"Angus Anglesea was at this time about twenty years of age; with a form of medium height, slender and fair, with light hair and mustache, and blue eyes. His appearance and manners were pleasing and attractive.

"I could not have believed any evil of him then.

"On the day after the arrival of my brother and his friend, the good doctor, who had accompanied us to Brighton, took his leave, after having warned my teachers that their office was, for the present, a sinecure, and that there were really to be no lessons for the next three months, or until my health should be fully reëstablished.

"After the doctor left our days were given up to enjoyment—walks on the esplanade, sails on the sea, bathing in the surf, drives along the coast, rides over the downs, saunters on the pier—a perpetual recurrence of delightful recreations, each one enhancing the pleasures of all the others.

"It seemed paradise to me. My brother lived with

us, of course. Angus Anglesea had lodgings near us, and came every day to join in our amusements.

"The Eleventh Hussars were stationed at Brighton Barracks then, and the officers were often on parade. Anglesea was not at that time in the army. He received his commission afterward; but he knew a number of the officers, and introduced some of them to me. My French governess or my English teacher was always at my side on these occasions.

"So three enchanting months passed.

"My brother's holidays were over, and he was now to go to Eton. My father's London solicitor was charged with the duty of making all the arrangements for his entrance into college.

"On the fifteenth of September he left me, with the promise to return and spend the Christmas holidays with me, for I was to winter at Brighton.

"Angus Anglesea remained at Brighton. Friends and neighbors of his father's, in Lancashire—the Earl and Countess of Middlemoor, with their only daughter—had arrived at their seaside home on Brunswick Terrace, and Anglesea had remained to see them. Even then he was reported to be engaged to the Lady Mary.

"Soon I heard that young Anglesea had left his lodgings and accepted the invitation of the earl and countess to make their house his home during his sojourn at the seaside.

"After this we did not see so much of young Anglesea.

"He came but seldom to our lodgings, and never joined us in our walks on the seaside. Whenever we chanced to meet him, he was in the company of the Middlemoors, either driving or walking with them.

"If Brighton had seemed to me the paradise of life and light, splendor and gayety, in the summer months, when the season was at its lowest ebb, what was it, if

you please, in the early autumn, when the tide of wealth and fashion set in?

"No words of mine can describe my impression of it, my delight in it.

"The bijou of a theater and the elegant assembly rooms were opened for the season. The 'paradise' was one panorama of brilliant crowds. It was like nothing real to my simplicity."

CHAPTER XXVII

LUIGI SAVIOLA

"I COME now to the most fateful day of my unhappy life. The day on which Luigi Saviola was presented to me.

"It was in November; but it was bright and sunny on the seashore.

"My companion and chaperon—once my English teacher—Miss Murray, was confined to the house by a slight attack of bronchitis, which she was carefully nursing lest it should become serious.

"I was walking on the esplanade, attended by my French governess.

"At that early hour, ten in the morning, there were but few people out besides nursemaids and children.

"We were sauntering along slowly, when we saw coming toward us Anglesea and another young gentleman, walking arm in arm, apparently on the most friendly and even affectionate terms.

"In a few minutes we met face to face.

"Anglesea bowed, and then presented his companion:

" 'Prince Luigi Saviola.'

"Madame de la Champe received the stranger's low bow with all the courtesy of her nation.

"I do not know how I received him. I wore a little round turban hat, with a little thin, gray gauze mask veil over my face, which completely shaded my features, while it enabled me to look at the stranger.

"I know not if there be any such thing as love at first sight; for the only real, lasting love of my life was of slow growth, as you know, Abel. Oh, Abel! you do know that I love you!

"No! I do not believe there is such a thing as real love at first sight; but I do know that there is a madness that apes it.

"Some fascination made me look at this Italian from behind the shield of my gray veil, while he talked with my vivacious French governess, who quickly engaged him in conversation.

"He was young—quite youthful, indeed; and—it is a very effeminate term to apply to a man—but he was beautiful—not handsome, but beautiful. He was of medium height and slender proportions; but he was perfectly elegant in form and perfectly graceful in gesture. His profile was purely, finely Grecian. His complexion pale and clear, his hair, eyebrows and mustache of darkest brown; his eyes of darkest violet blue. Yet all this description gives but the outline of the youth's form and face—it cannot give the subtle and exquisite charm of expression which was the chief beauty of his aspect, nor can it give the lingering music of the most melodious voice that ever spoke.

"Are you displeased with me, that I describe this stranger so minutely?

"I do it in cold blood, Abel, and only that you may understand and perhaps pardon the fascination he possessed over a sensitive, imaginative young recluse, such as I had been. And some instinct told me even then that this attraction was mutual, though we did not exchange a word, and he could clearly see my face.

"After a few moments of courteous conversation, the two young gentlemen bowed and walked on.

"I went home in a dream—the face and voice of the young stranger haunting my spirit.

"The Frenchwoman made some few favorable remarks on the manner and appearance of the young Italian; but I did not reply—I could not.

"I passed the day in a vision. I was like one possessed.

"Two days later young Anglesea made us the first call of many days.

"Madame de la Champe immediately beset him with questions about the young Italian.

"I said nothing, but listened with the deepest interest for his replies.

("This is a confession, you know, Abel. And I mean that it shall be a full one.)

"I listened with the most eager curiosity to hear all that could be told of one who had taken complete possession of my fancy and imagination, if not of my heart.

"And what Anglesea told us of Luigi Saviola did but deepen the profound interest I already took in the young stranger.

"He told us that Saviola was of royal race, yet of advanced republican ideas. That for the expression of his principles he was a political exile. He was wealthy, and his wealth had been confiscated. He was now living in Brighton on the wreck of his fortune; but was brave, cheerful and heroic, as we had seen him.

"All this, as I say, deepened my interest in Saviola, and heightened my admiration for him. He was no longer a most charming person, but he was a hero and a martyr, a patriot and a humanitarian. And already I loved, adored, worshiped him, or believed that I did.

"You see, Abel, what a very 'foolish virgin' I was. But then, I was a motherless child.

"Anglesea was devoted to Saviola, and expressed the most profound esteem and admiration for him. He asked permission to bring the young Italian to call on us.

"It was an indiscreet request to make; but Anglesea was young and impulsive.

"It was an improper favor to grant, but my governess was vain and faithless, and had herself taken a fancy to the young Italian, so she consented that he should come.

"The intervening time between this day and the day of the visit was passed by me in a state of feverish anticipation.

"The next evening Anglesea brought Saviola. He was much more attractive than ever. He talked mostly with Madame de la Champe, but I felt that he looked mostly at me—at me, who scarcely ever uttered a word.

"This was the first of many calls—for some time made only in the company of his friend, and received by me only in the company of one or both of my governesses.

"How can I tell you the progress of that infatuation, hallucination—call it what you please—that kindled at the first meeting, and increased with every after interview?

"Saviola never sat by my side in those early days; never took my hand, except at meeting and parting, when, with the reverential tenderness of his race, he would raise it to his lips, bowing over it. He scarcely ever addressed me with words, but with glances—how eloquently! All the wooing was done through the passionate eyes.

"At first I could not look at him at all; then only very shyly; and then at length my eyes seemed irresistibly attracted to meet his—even to seek to meet his eys.

"Oh, Abel, I am telling you everything! I am unveiling my heart to you! How will you receive my con-

fession? Will you believe that there was no conscious sense of wrongdoing at the time? But, indeed, there was none. Will you believe the stranger truth that this was not love which I gave to Luigi? I did not know what love meant until I met the one love of my life—years after this lunacy. Oh, Abel, believe that this delirium was not love, though even I, knowing no better, mistook it for love at the time. It was madness; it was hero-worship, enthusiasm. But not love. This young Italian exile, beautiful as Adonis in his person, was idealized and glorified in my vision by his history.

"Remember how young I was—scarcely past childhood; and remember how I had lived isolated from all society of my own rank and age, secluded in a desolate old manor house on the Irish coast, whose very name—Weirdwaste—could not tell its dreariness; spending my solitary life in wandering by the seashore during the days, reading the old romances and poems left on the bookshelves of the old manor house, and dreaming dreams and seeing visions that seemed to have come to be realized in my present surroundings and crystallized in the person of Saviola.

"Oh, Abel! Oh, Abel! Pity and pardon me if you can, for now I come to the part of my life which I shrink from approaching as a child would shrink from a fierce fire.

"Luigi came every day now, whether Anglesea accompanied him or not. I had learned a little Italian from Miss Murray, at Weirdwaste, and now Madame de la Champe was continuing my studies in that language.

"Luigi found it out, and begged her permission to bring me some standard Italian works and to assist me in the translation.

"Madame, who looked upon me only as a child, and thought the attention of the young Italian so many

tributes to her own charms, very affably consented, and so the exile became my unpaid master in Italian.

"The 'standard' works he brought were all poetry—Petrarch's, Tasso's and others' impassioned songs. These he translated for me in more ways than one—with his pen, with his tongue, and more eloquently and effectively still with his glorious eyes.

" As for me, I was far gone in madness before Luigi ever had the opportunity to speak one direct word of love to me.

"The inevitable hour came at last. I was reading Italian poetry with Luigi.

"Madame de la Champe sat near, working a screen in Berlin wool. Suddenly she got up and left the room to match some shade of worsted.

"The next instant Saviola was at my feet, and, in a sudden tempest of impassioned words, he told me what his eyes had told me long ago.

"This was the first time we had been alone since we had met on the esplanade, and he had seized the occasion.

"I could not reply to him; but I did not repulse him, and he saw that I did not wish to do so.

" 'Madame!' I whispered, as I heard the Frenchwoman's approach, which had not attracted his attention.

"He arose at once, and resumed his attitude of teacher.

"Madame entered. She had not been gone two minutes.

"Gradually, as the intimacy between madame and the exile advanced, her strict surveillance over me was relaxed. I was still a child in her eyes, and she was a charming woman who had fired the young Italian with admiration. So she did not fear to leave Luigi and myself together.

"As for Miss Murray, she hated all foreigners, espe-

cially Italians, and most especially political exiles, so she was seldom present during Saviola's calls. We had many a *tête-à-tête*. And for a few weeks we lived happily in mere certainty that we could see and talk with each other every day. But then came a change.

"Luigi became restless and unhappy. He never smiled now. He often sighed heavily. He grew paler than his custom and very thin.

"Madame—poor madame—thought the youth was pining away for her love. And surely she did all she could to encourage him to speak plainly to her; all she could, except to tell him in so many words that she was ready to marry him.

"One day she sent me out of the room, and was with him alone for an hour. I think then she really did propose to him, and that he saved himself without wounding her, for when she recalled me to the room Saviola was gone, and she was in tears, when she said to me:

" 'Ah, the poor prince! He is so honorable, so conscientious. He sacrifices—he immolates himself! It is for duty—it is for patriotism! We must cure him of all that.' "

CHAPTER XXVIII

A MAD ACT

"So THANKS to the blind vanity of the French governess, the young Italian and her pupil escaped her suspicion.

"We were Romeo and Juliet. We were Francesca and Paolo, Tasso and Leonora.

"Ah! I have often thought since that it was well, in the interest of poetry and romance, that the story of these lovers never carried them into matrimony; for

such delirious passion is not the love that lasts through a long life!

"A disastrous day was fast approaching us.

"Luigi had been for some time suffering under the deepest depression of spirits. Madame looked at him and sighed as if she understood his secret sorrow and could console him, if he were not so morbidly honorable and conscientious, if he were not so determined to sacrifice, to immolate himself on the altar of duty and patriotism.

"One morning she left the room on some errand that her restlessness suggested.

"In another moment Luigi was again at my feet, pleading with me now to give myself to him, or rather to take him for myself, for my lover, adorer and husband at once and forever.

"He explained in rapid, vehement words that he was recalled to Italy; that he must go; that he could not and would not leave me behind; he would rather die than leave me.

"All this, and much more, he poured forth in a torrent of words, to which I only replied by tears.

"He went on rapidly explaining, lest we should be interrupted before he got through. He told me that all was arranged for our flight. That Anglesea would help us and keep our secret.

" 'Madame!' I whispered, as my quick ears heard a footstep on the hall outside.

" 'Meet me on the pier—four o'clock this afternoon. Come without fail, if you care to save me from self-destruction!' he hastily whispered, as he arose and resumed his seat.

"It was not madame who entered, however; it was Miss Murray.

"She bowed stiffly to the Italian, and then glanced searchingly around the room. Seeing no one present

but Saviola and myself—realizing that we were *tête-à-tête*—she frowned and sharply demanded:

"'Where is madame?'

"'She has just left the room,' I replied.

"'Very improper, very irregular, most reprehensible! I shall write to-day,' she said, as she sat down bolt upright on the chair nearest us.

"Miss Murray was a conscientious woman, and she did her duty; there was no doubt of that! but her words and her threatened action decided me.

"Swift as lightning through my mind sped this question: What will be the effect of her letter to my father? Something that will separate me at once and forever from Saviola? I could not for a moment endure the thought.

"I looked at my lover, and my look said plainly as tongue could speak:

"'I will meet you, and go with you to Italy.'

"And his eyes responded with equal clearness:

"'I understand you, and I thank and bless you.'

"Soon after he took a formal leave of me, and raised Miss Murray's hand to his lips and kissed it with devotional tenderness as he bowed.

"'He is a very perfect gentleman, as indeed why should he not be? A man of his rank?' said the half-appeased old maiden lady. 'But all the same, my dear, he is young and unmarried, and a foreigner! And, what is worse still, he is a political refugee Always suspicious characters, my dear! Always suspicious characters!'

"'But Prince Saviola is well introduced, Miss Murray, and he is staying with the Middlemoors,' I ventured to advance in my lover's defense.

"'Very true, my dear! But that does not prevent him from being a foreigner and a political refugee,' persisted Miss Murray, in her most absolute manner.

" 'I cannot deny the fact,' I admitted.

"And then I went to my room and packed a small handbag with the merest necessaries for my journey.

"We still kept schoolroom hours for meals and had our dinner at two o'clock.

"Madame drank claret and Miss Murray stout at dinner; but both equally went to sleep in their easy chairs over the drawing-room fire, while I was supposed to be busy with my exercises until the five o'clock tea.

"Now was my opportunity.

"As soon as my governesses were both asleep in their chairs, I left the room, went up to my chamber, put on my outdoor dress, took my traveling bag and left the house.

"Never was there before so perfectly easy and simple a flight.

"I walked down the King's Road until I reached the new pier, and there at the land end I met Saviola and Anglesea waiting for me. A close carriage stood within call.

"Saviola was very much agitated.

"It was Anglesea who spoke first.

" 'My dear little girl,' he said, as if he had been speaking to his niece or younger sister, 'I do not at all approve of these proceedings; but as I feel perfectly certain that you would go on without my consent and assistance, I think it is best, in the interests of your absent family, that I should aid and abet you in what you do—see you safely, legally and regularly through it. Now do not be frightened. We shall take the train for London. Thence the night express for Scotland. And tomorrow morning, as soon as we are over the border, you shall be married. I shall not leave you until I witness the ceremony and hold the certificate in my pocket. You will write to your father and plead your cause as no one but yourself can do so well. Perhaps he will storm, per-

haps he will reproach you, but he will end in forgiving you—when he has considered all the circumstances. Here is the carriage.'

"While Anglesea had been talking, Saviola had brought up the vehicle, and now he handed me into it and entered himself, followed by Anglesea.

"We drove at once to the station and took tickets for London Bridge. In five minutes we three were crowded into a coupé; and in little more than an hour we were at London Bridge.

"Anglesea, who had resumed the rôle of friend, guide and protector to the two young maniacs, took us to a quiet family hotel, where we three got supper in a private sitting room.

" 'I assure you I do all this in the interests of my friends, your relatives, my dear. I knew that Saviola would, sooner or later, run off with you. So I determined to see you safely through it all!' he explained again, as we sat down to supper.

"When the meal was over, Anglesea called a cab and we all drove to King's Cross Station, where we were just in time to catch the night express on the Great Northern Railway.

"Anglesea took a compartment for ourselves, and took along also a basket of fruit, a bag of cakes, and a box of bonbons, for he knew that I was still child enough to love sweetmeats. He also took half a dozen of bottled lemonade and ginger beer.

"We none of us slept a wink that night, but laughed and talked all night, and ate and drank at intervals.

"I did not at all feel the gravity of the situation. I had not left any one behind whom I cared much about, or to whom I thought I owed any duty. So, I had no regrets or compunctions on that score.

"As for my dear father, time, absence and negligence had really estranged us, or seemed to have done so.'

"I even thought my marriage might bring us closer together; for Luigi had promised to take me to him as soon as he should consent to see me.

"So, without a regret for the past, or a misgiving of the future, I yielded myself up to the joy of the present.

"It was a very happy journey. Excitement kept us all from feeling the least sense of fatigue.

"About dawn we stopped at a wayside station.

" 'Here we are,' said Anglesea, as the guard called out the name of the place.

"We alighted, and Anglesea, keeping up his rôle, proposed that we should go first to the hotel which stood on the other side of the track.

" 'We must get washed, and combed, and fed, my children, before we can present ourselves before the minister,' he said, speaking to us as if we were indeed children and he were quite a venerable party. He was, in truth, younger by a year than Saviola.

"We went to the hotel, the 'Victoria,' where two rooms were engaged—one for me alone, and one for Anglesea and Savialo jointly.

"I went to mine to refresh my toilet. I had never dressed myself without the help of a maid in my life, and hardly knew how to go about it. However, I rang for the chambermaid, and with her assistance I took a bath and made a change of clothes.

"After this I went down and joined Anglesea and Saviola in the ladies' parlor. They took me to breakfast in the coffee room; and soon after that we all three walked out in search of a minister. No marriage license was required in Scotland.

"We found a church, with a parsonage adjoining.

"We all three passed through the gate leading into the grounds before the house.

"But only Anglesea went up to the door and rang the bell.

"A servant maid opened to the summons.

"Anglesea spoke to her, and both disappeared in the house, leaving the door ajar.

"After a few minutes Anglesea reappeared at the door, and with a smile beckoned us to come in.

"We entered the hall, and were immediately conducted by our 'guide, philosopher and friend' to the minister's study on the right hand of the hall.

"There stood a venerable man, with white hair, and clothed in clerical black, to receive us.

"Very few questions were put to us, and our answers, mostly given through Anglesea, were satisfactory.

"We were then asked to come up and take our stand before the minister. And in a very few minutes the marriage ceremony, which I believed had made us man and wife, was completed.

"Then the old minister gave us a solemn lecture on the duties we had assumed. And then he made a fervent prayer for us, and ended by giving us his blessing.

"Anglesea paid him a munificent fee, for which the old man gave him thanks.

" 'And a marriage certificate, if you please, reverend sir. I am acting on the part of this young lady's absent friends, and I must omit no necessary formality,' said Anglesea.

"The demand was unusual; the certificate was considered unnecessary. The old minister told us so, and added that he had no printed form and never had had any.

" 'Then we will take a written form. Just write that on this day, in this place, you have united in marriage, Luigi Saviola, of Naples, Italy, and Elfrida Glennon, of Northumberland, England. Sign it yourself, as the minister, and allow me to sign it as a witness. It would also be better, too, if you could call in some member of your family to sign as a second witness. I think I have

seen the young woman who let us in peeping through the door through the whole performance. Please call her as a second witness.'

"The old man sighed and sat down to the table where his stationery lay, and wrote out the certificate.

"Anglesea read it critically, expressed himself satisfied, affixed his signature as witness, and then put the pen in the hand of the maid, who had been called in for the purpose, and who now scrawled her name under that of Anglesea.

"And it was finished."

CHAPTER XXIX

AFTER THE MARRIAGE

"We took leave of the old minister, who shook hands warmly with us at parting, repeating his benediction.

"We returned to the hotel, where Anglesea paid the bill and reclaimed our bags.

"Then we went to the station, where we had to wait some little time for the London train.

"It came up about nine o'clock. We entered it and were off to London. The daylight journey was even more pleasant than our festive night ride. I, who had been so confined all my life, could see the beautiful and varied scenery—the lakes and mountains of Northumberland; the moors and forests of Yorkshire; the castles, country seats, hamlets and farmhouses along the way. And to me all this was novel and delightful.

"We reached London at nightfall. And there we parted with Anglesea, who returned to Brighton to rejoin his friends the Middlemoors.

"As we were really very tired with our twenty-four

hours of travel, without sleep, we went to the Norfolk Hotel for the night.

"The next day we spent in seeing some of the sights of London, which I had never seen, and which, of course, filled me with wonder and interest—indeed, all my life since I had left Weirdwaste was marvelously changed and enlarged, even as if I were born in a new world.

"The next morning we took the tidal train from London Bridge and went down to Dover to meet the Calais boat.

" 'We will spend a month in Paris, my soul,' said Luigi to me, as we entered the train—'a full month, no less, my life.'

" 'But have you not to go immediately to Italy?' I inquired.

" 'Oh, no; I am recalled—that is, I am permitted to return, not commanded to do so,' he explained.

" 'Oh, then I misunderstood you.'

" 'Yes,' he said.

" 'And your estates, dear Luigi, Are they restored to you?' I next inquired, without one mercenary thought in my heart.

" 'Yes,' he replied, with a curious smile. 'Such as they are, my love and life, they are restored to me.'

" 'What do you mean?' I questioned.

" 'That they were not worth keeping from me, my own. Yet, fear not. I am not without resources. We shall spend a gay month in Paris.'

"And so we did.

"We reached that city the next morning and took apartments at the 'Splendide.'

"If to my rustic mind Brighton had been a delight Paris was now a rapture.

" 'Is there,' I asked of Luigi, after only one day's experience of the city—'is there another place in all this world so heavenly as Paris?'

"He looked at me a few seconds in silence, and then replied, with more knowledge than his years could have promised:

" 'No, my soul! There is no place on this planet so celestial, or so infernal, as is this city.'

"I stared at him in dismay.

" 'Never fear, my love. You shall never see or hear the infernos of the city.'

"That day I took time to write to my father. I had not an hour's leisure during our mad journeys to do so before.

"I told him all the circumstances and all the experiences of outer and inner life that had driven me to take my fate in my own hands and go away with Luigi Saviola to be married. And I gave him all the details of the journey and the ceremony. And I ended by imploring him to forgive us both and to receive us on a visit.

"After that act of duty, I plunged with Luigi into all the gayeties of gay Paris, and saw no signs of the 'infernos.' Music, the drama, balls, excursions, these filled up our days, for a month of mad rapture.

"Then, about the middle of December, we went down to Marseilles, and took a steamer to Naples, where we arrived in health, spirits and safety.

"I had often questioned Luigi about his family, but he told me he had none to speak of. He was an only child; his father and mother were among the angels in heaven. His uncle was a priest and missionary in Brazil. His two aunts were nuns—one in a Benedictine convent in France, the other in an Augustine sisterhood in Spain.

"I had questioned him about his home.

"He had described to me a half ruined and wholly uninhabitable castle situated among the forest-covered mountains of the wild Abruzzo.

"But oh! how I longed to go there! All my love of the historic, the romantic, the picturesque was engaged in that longing!

"On our landing at Naples I proposed to go.

"But he told me that at this season of the year the roads were so very bad as to render the journey impracticable.

"He took me to the 'Vittoria,' where we rested for a few days.

"Here again I wrote to my father, telling him of my first letter, which I feared had never reached him, and repeating at length the story of my marriage, and the plea for his pardon.

"I waited weeks for an answer before I gave up hope.

"Naples did not offer many sources of amusement, but we availed ourselves of all that was to be obtained.

"It was during our sojourn in this city that I gradually learned—what I was very unwilling to believe and very deeply distressed to know—namely, the nature of those resources of which Luigi had spoken to me; they were the gaming tables, at which he was almost always a successful player. My hero, and martyr, and patriot was a gambler!

"It was a great grief, and I never really recovered from it.

"He won large sums of money, and lavished gifts upon me which gave me no pleasure.

"About the middle of February we went to Rome for the carnival, for Lent was rather late this year.

"And, after the week of orgies, we still remained in the 'Eternal City' until the end of March, that I might see all its glories, and, ah me! not a few of its shames.

"In April we went to Venice—the city of a hundred isles. I thought I had seen the most marvelous and enchanting things in the world, but here again wonder upon wonder burst upon my amazed soul.

"Why should I go on writing all this like the index of a guidebook?

"You and I have gone over Europe together. You know me, and may judge what it was to me the first time.

"Let me be brief now.

"Luigi, wherever we went, pursued his profession, and was never without 'revenues.' I looked in vain for any sign of heroism, self-devotion or patriotism in him.

"Sometimes in the cities we passed through, in the public gardens, or the parlors of hotels, I heard questions discussed which stirred my blood—questions of the rights of man in all its ramifications—questions that made my heart beat in sympathy.

"They never moved him.

"And I wondered. Once I asked him if he really had lost all interest in the welfare of the world.

"He shrugged his shoulders, and replied that he never had felt any.

"On another occasion, when I spoke of the elevation of mankind, he answered:

" 'We are young. We are fair. We are healthy. We are happy. Let us enjoy ourselves, and let mankind go to Hades.'

"My dark-eyed Luigi was neither hero nor martyr; neither patriot nor humanitarian. He was only a beautiful and joyous youth, bent on making the merriest of every hour of life at cost of anybody else, except of himself and me.

"Oh, how I was disappointed in him! A broken idol is a very sad event in the life of a romantic dreamer, I fancy.

"I began to try to remember how I had ever got the idea that he was a patriot and a political refugee, and the rest of it. And I recollected that it was from Anglesea and from Madame de la Champe.

"He—Luigi—had never pretended to be anything but my lover. And he was my lover still. He continued to be my lover to the last of his short, young life.

"I must pass on now to the tragedy of our marriage."

CHAPTER XXX

AWAKENING

There is not in this world of sin
A soul so deeply sunk therein,
Thronged though it be with crimes and cares,
Revenges, malices, despairs,
However dire the phantoms there,
However pestilent its air—
But in its thoroughfares, night and day,
There ever is some golden ray,
Like a sweet child from home astray—
Some light of Heaven, some fragment thence
Of primal love and innocence,
Which keeps the angels on its track
To lure and win and lead it back.

—Wm. H. Holcombe.

"We lived at the best hotels in every town and city where we stopped, but we never stayed long at any place. Saviola was too successful a gambler for that.

"He was always kind to me, and would have loaded me with jewels and costly dress, but that I would have none of them, for my soul was troubled by the way in which he made his money—a way that he no longer tried to conceal from me.

"I had periodical fits of homesickness, during which I wrote to my father and to my teachers, but without

in any instance receiving a reply. Then I would write again and again, with no better result. And finally I would give up hoping to hear from them, and try to resign myself to my fate; until my next attack of homesickness would set my pen in motion again.

"Later on, not homesickness alone, but remorse and despair and terror seized me. I was beginning to lose all hope of ever being forgiven by my father; and, ah me! I was also beginning to lose esteem for my husband, for whose sake I had left all my friends and relations.

"Luigi was still fond of me in that way that a child is fond of a favorite toy of which he is not yet tired.

"I had discovered my own self-deception.

"Other young girls have come to grief and death through their deception by others. I had only myself to blame! Myself had only deceived me. But it was bitter! oh, how bitter! to find out that the hero, martyr, patriot and humanitarian I had imagined, was only a very handsome young gambler, who was not too honest or truthful!

"My undeceived soul sickened at him and at myself!

"My very last attack of homesickness found us at Geneva, where we had an elegant suit of apartments in the Hotel Beau Rivage.

"Again in one day I wrote five letters to absent friends—to my father, to Miss Murray, to Madame de la Champe, to Dr. Alexander, and to the Rev. Mr. Clement. From some of these I should surely get an answer. But week after week passed and no answer came to me.

"In the second month after our arrival at Geneva, Saviola was suddenly called to Paris—on imperative business, he said; but I had learned to distrust. I could not accompany him—my state of health utterly precluded the idea of my traveling. He took a very af-

fectionate leave of me, and promised to be back again in a few days.

"'A few days' is a vague term! Yet I was not disturbed by that. He left me, and I never saw his face again.

"Just one week after he went away my child was born—a boy. I was very healthy, and had a rapid convalescence, notwithstanding the suspense and anxiety I was suffering on account of my father.

"I wrote to Luigi—to the address he had given me—and informed him of the event. But I received no reply to my letter. Yet, I got better every day, and I took great comfort and delight in my child. Also, I daily expected the return of Saviola to answer my letter in person—for I remembered that he hated to write, and was therefore one of the very worst correspondents in the world.

"But I was disappointed. Day followed day, week succeeded week, and I neither saw nor heard from Saviola, nor received any answers to any letter written to my father and friends.

"I knew that my father must long have left the archipelago, but I supposed that he must have—as usual—left orders for any letters that might come for him after his departure to be forwarded to his new address; so, though I had expected delay, I had not anticipated final disappointment.

"It was now the first of October, and many tourists were leaving the lake. Saviola had left me amply provided with funds, so that I had no fear of embarrassment, especially as I was very economical, only applying the ill-gotten money to my barest necessities. Besides, I had my boy, so that I was able to wait quite cheerfully the return of my husband.

"Ah me! It was not Saviola that I was troubled about. It was my father. At length it occurred to me to write

to my father's London bankers to inquire for him. And I wondered that I had never thought of doing so before.

"On this occasion I received a prompt answer, which was at once encouraging and depressing, as you will see, contradictory as the statement seems. Messrs. Rhodes told me that the earl had taken the countess to the Canaries for her ladyship's health, and that they had wintered there, but that in May they had sailed for an extensive yachting cruise, from which they were expected to return to England some time in February.

"So my father could never have received any of my letters, and was therefore not the unbending, unforgiving, pitiless father I had thought him. He had probably written me many letters whose final destination was the dead-letter office. I might still hope for his ready forgiveness. So far the news was encouraging.

"But, then, on the other hand, he would not return until February. This was the depressing feature in the letter. Yet the encouraging circumstances outweighed the depressing item, so that, on the whole, I was more hopeful and more cheerful.

"As the days of October grew shorter and cooler I began to be impatient to leave the place, and for this reason eager for the return of Saviola. At length I grew really despondent. It was about this time—the middle of October—that I saw in the little Geneva paper an item that startled and delighted me. It was under the head of 'Arrivals.' It was but a line:

"'The Hon. Angus Anglesea, England—Hotel des Bergues.'

"Without an instant's delay I sat down and wrote a note, asking him to call on me at the Beau Rivage.

"The thought of meeting one home face—and that the face of my brother's dear friend, Saviola's good

friend, my own true friend, who had traveled with us to Scotland to see that I should be regularly married before he left me under the protection of Saviola—filled my soul with delightful anticipations.

"He came promptly in response to my summons. It was only noon when the waiter opened the door of the little drawing room where I sat, and announced:

" 'The Hon. Mr. Anglesea.'

"I sprang up and held out both my hands to welcome him.

"He raised one to his lips, bowed over it, and said:

" 'I hope I find you well, madame.'

" 'Oh! I am so glad—so glad to see you!' I exclaimed, at random.

"He took a seat.

"I sank into my easy-chair, my heart beating with excitement, with tumult, only to see the face of a friend.

" 'I am very happy to come to you,' he said. 'I hope Saviola is well,' he added—dubiously, as I thought.

" 'He is always well,' I replied. 'He is in Paris.'

" 'You hear from him daily, of course?'

" 'No. He is a poor correspondent. I shall not hear from him until I see him, I fear.'

"He looked very grave, but made no comment.

"I hastened to ask him if he knew where my father then was.

"His reply confirmed the banker's news—the truth of which, by the way, I had never doubted.

"He said that my father was wintering in the Canaries for the sake of the countess' health, and that Viscount Glennon, my brother, was with them.

"This was the reason, then, why I had never heard from my brother.

"Mr. Anglesea appeared preoccupied while he spoke. Then, after a short silence, he said:

"'Ah, madame, pray do not consider me impertinent. Believe me, I speak only in your own interests——'

"'As you acted when you went to Scotland with us,' I added.

"'Precisely, Madame la Princesse.'

"'Then speak freely, Mr. Anglesea. I shall not take offense.'

"'Then I wish to inquire when you last heard from Luigi Saviola.'

"I hated to answer that question—to confess the many days that had elapsed since I had seen or heard from my husband. Yet I answered:

"'I have not heard from him since he left here for Paris, six weeks ago.'

"'Ah!' he said, very gravely.

"'But I expect to see him soon,' I added.

"'Indeed!' he exclaimed, in surprise.

"'Yes, indeed. Of course. Why not?' I demanded, in astonishment.

"He was silent.

"'Why not?' I again demanded, uneasily.

"He looked grave.

"'What do you mean, Mr. Anglesea?' I exclaimed, anxiously.

"'Ah, madame!' he sighed. 'You know so little of the world! So little of the world!'

"'Mr. Anglesea, you distress me. Has anything happened to Saviola?'

"'Ah, madame, you were but a child when you went off to marry the Italian. I—knowing full well that I could not prevent that mad act which was sure to take place—went with you, for your sake, for your brother, my friend's sake, to prevent any fatal error from being committed. I thought I had prevented calamity to you. I know better now. Ah, yes!'

"'Mr. Anglesea,' I said, 'you frighten me. What has happened? I implore you to tell me.'

"'Not now! I cannot! But do not be alarmed! Take courage! I am your friend! I will see you through this trouble.'

"'No! you must tell me—now! Has—has—has——' I could scarcely bear to put the question; but I nerved myself to do it. 'Has Luigi left me—deserted me?' And I sank back and covered my burning face with my hands.

"'How shall I answer your question, madame? But put the question rather to your own intelligence. He left here six weeks ago. He has not returned or written to you since. Any one less youthful, innocent and inexperienced than yourself would draw inferences from these circumstances. Will you excuse me now? I will see you this evening. May I?'

"'Yes,' I answered, mechanically.

"He bowed and left the room.

"I was alone again. I wished to be alone to collect my thoughts. It had never occurred to me that Saviola would desert me—never!

"He had ceased to be my king, my hero, my idol. He had revealed himself to be a gambler, a sharper, an adventurer. I had long ceased to love, trust, or respect him. Still, I knew that he was fond of me, in his way, and so I never imagined that he could forsake me. And, now that the possibility was presented to me, it filled me with more wonder than sorrow or mortification.

"I was not nearly so much troubled by the possible desertion of Saviola as I had been by the long silence and fancied implacability of my father. I was sorry for Saviola only because, though I had ceased to love, or trust, or respect the man, I had begun to compassionate him. He seemed so much weaker than I was.

"With this feeling of pity and regret was mingled

one of intense relief. I had so little to lose in losing the man whose life was a constant source of shame and fear to me! But, whatever he may have been, his rank was unquestionable. I had been lawfully married to him, and I was the Princess Saviola. And my son was Prince Rolando Saviola. No one could deprive us of these old and honorable, though now empty, titles.

"I soon reconciled myself to my desertion, even if I did not rejoice in my deliverance. I made up my mind to take my child and go directly to Weirdwaste, my own inheritance from my mother, and there await my father's return to England; then confess the whole truth to him and throw myself upon his love and his protection.

"But, ah, Heaven! I did not yet know the worst!"

CHAPTER XXXI

PRETENDED CONSOLATION

"In the evening Anglesea called on me again.

"His manner was full of the most respectful sympathy. He was my brother's dearest friend. He had acted in my father's and my brother's absence as my own best friend; and, since he could not prevent my romantic escapade, he had attended me in the character of a guardian, to see that no fatal mistake was made through Saviola's ignorance of national laws and customs. Therefore, I had every reason to trust in him and confide in him as in an elder brother.

"I was alone, in the little drawing room, when he entered. I received him as warmly, though more gravely, than when he had called at noon.

"When we were seated I asked him—as I would have

asked my brother—whether my husband had really, finally abandoned me.

"He looked searchingly into my face, as if to see how I would be likely to take his answer.

"Finding in my expression no very distressing anxiety, but simply a wish to know the truth, he replied:

" 'Saviola has disappointed us all. If I were not speaking to you I should say that he is scarcely worthy of thought, still less of regret.'

" 'But—are you sure? Has he really and finally abandoned me?' I repeated.

" 'He has.'

" 'You are sure of this?'

" 'I am.'

"His words and tones were grave, sweet and compassionate.

' 'Where is he now?' I next inquired.

" 'In Paris.'

" 'I must write to him again, then,' I said, with the idea that, although I no longer loved or respected the man, he was my husband, and to write to him was my duty. 'I will—will write to him to-night.'

" 'You may do so,' he said, gravely and tenderly. 'Nay, I would even counsel you to do so for the relief of your own mind, and that you may never have the slightest cause for self-reproach. But I warn you that it will have no effect whatever upon Saviola. He will not answer your letter.'

" 'He has not answered any letter of mine since he left for Paris. But, surely, if I write and ask him, plainly, whether he ever means to return to me, and beg him to reply, so that I may know what to do, he will answer.'

" 'No, he will not. But, to satisfy yourself, write to him at once. Then you will know, Elfrida!"

"In the days when we three—Anglesea, my brother and myself were as intimate and familiar as the children of one house—he had followed suit with Francis and called me by my Christian name, and sometimes by its abbreviation. I had liked it then, and I liked it now, though this was the first time, since my marriage, that he had given it to me.

" 'Yes, I will write to-night. I will write at once,' I said.

" 'Then I will bid you good-evening. There is a mail that closes at eleven o'clock. If I leave you now you may be able to secure it,' he said, rising.

" 'Thank you, Angus. Come again to-morrow,' I said, using the name I had been accustomed to give him when he was the daily and beloved companion of my brother and myself.

"He took my hand, bowed over it and left the room.

"Then I sat down to my desk to write the letter to Saviola in Paris.

"I did not reproach him, nor lament his absence, nor write in any way unkindly or sorrowfully to him. I simply reminded him how long he had been gone; how many letters I had written that remained unanswered, and then inquired whether he meant to return to me, and if so, when? I ended by telling him that my little son and myself were in good health, and begging him to answer me to the point that I might know what to do. So I left him at perfect liberty to act for himself.

"When I had sealed and directed this letter I rang and dispatched it to the hotel bag that left the house at a quarter to eleven.

"Then I went to bed.

"My child usually slept with his nurse in a little room off my bedchamber. But now I called her to bring the baby to me; and I took him into bed and drew him to my bosom, finding comfort in the thought that my child

would never desert me, and that no one on earth had power to take him from me. What a soothing balm that little form was pressed to my heart.

"I lay awake nearly all that night, not with trouble or anxiety, but with thoughts and plans for the future of my child and myself.

"I had made up my mind. If I should get no answer from Saviola I would make ready and leave Switzerland for Ireland. I would go with my child to Weirdwaste, which was my own, and live there as I had lived before the fatal journey to Brighton. I would live among my warm-hearted Irish tenants, who, poor as my forefathers had been for generations, had never been oppressed, but always helped to the extent of our power. They had loved my mother, had loved me for her sake, and they would now welcome and love my child, who would be the heir of Weirdwaste, if of nothing more.

"I would live at Weirdwaste until the return of my father, when I would confess all my faults and follies to him, and appeal to his affection for forgiveness and protection.

"In two years and a few months I should be of age, and should enter into the full possession of my poor, old estate.

"I should live there always, and bring up my boy to be a Christian gentleman and a good and wise landlord.

"The excellent vicar should be his tutor and look after his education, and the amiable doctor should be his physician and look after his health.

"Francis, my dear brother, would visit me often, I felt sure. My father would come sometimes. These were all I really cared to see.

"We should be happy—my litte son and I—in spite of all that had passed. He would never, from his father's example, grow up to become a gambler, a wine

bibber, or an adventurer. He should be trained to become an honor to his name and a blessing to his tenantry.

"Thinking these pleasant thoughts I fell asleep at last and realized all my anticipations—in my dreams!

"The next day, and every day for a week, Angus Anglesea came to see me.

"He no longer spoke of Saviola; but he talked to me of my dear brother, his own dearest friend—a theme of which I never tired. He told me that his ardent studies at Eton had overtasked his strength. His physicians recommended a long vacation, and a total change of air and scene. Therefore, he accompanied his father and stepmother to the Canaries—Dr. Alexander and the Rev. Dr. Clement, of Weirdwaste, attending the party, as traveling physician and private tutor.

" 'So,' said I, 'that is the reason why none of my letters addressed to my old friends at Weirdwaste were ever answered. But since the vicar and the doctor were conscripted for foreign service, who, may I ask, was left to take charge of the souls and bodies of the poor people at Weirdwaste?'

" 'My child, clergymen and physicians are as plenty as wild berries. A curate without a parish and a doctor without a practice were easily found to fill the places of the hard-worked and badly paid old vicar and doctor, who needed rest and change about as much as any of the traveling party.'

" 'So all my friends are in the Canaries!'

" 'Except myself, Elfrida. I am here, and I will remain near you, to guard you as an elder brother, until your fate is decided.'

" 'A girl's fate is supposed to be decided when she is married, but that does not take into account the possibility of her desertion by her husband,' I replied, but without any bitterness of feeling.

" 'No,' he admitted, very gravely—'no, because such

possibilities are as exceptional as they are tragical. But take courage, Elfrida. As I was your brother's truest friend and brother, so I will be yours, to remain near you, to guard you and assist you as long as you may need me.'

"'Thank you, Angus! Oh, thank you! I am glad that all my family and friends are in the Canaries, since it is so good for them to be there. And I am glad—oh! so glad that you are here, Angus! I do not feel quite alone and helpless now that you are here. It is very good of you to say that you will remain near me until something is settled. But will not your doing so interfere with some of your previous engagements?'

"'Not with any,' he replied. 'I am an idle man. And even if it were not so—even if I were over head and ears in business—I should let all go in order to be of service to my dear friend's sister in her need. And believe me, Elfrida, I find the greatest happiness in serving you.'

"His generous devotion moved me to tears. I thanked him in the most earnest words at my command.

"The week passed, and no letter came from Saviola. I was not disappointed, for now I scarcely expected to get one. I reconciled myself to my fate as a forsaken wife all the more cheerfully for my child's sake, who would be thus saved from the baleful effects of his father's evil example.

"The week passed, and though no letter came from Saviola, no word on the subject was spoken between Anglesea and myself."

CHAPTER XXXII

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

"ANGLESEA watched me closely, as if in anxiety to see how much this suspense and uncertainty might affect my health and spirits. And I think he was surprised and pleased to discover that I was not distressed by the situation.

"It was on the eighth day after my letter had been dispatched that the subject of that letter was first mentioned. It was I who first spoke of it.

"Anglesea came in to make his usual morning call.

"After our greetings were over, and we had sat down, I said to him:

" 'It is now more than a week since I wrote to Saviola. I have now no longer the faintest hope of receiving an answer to my letter. I shall not wait here longer. I shall leave Geneva to-morrow.'

" 'I never supposed for a moment that you would ever hear from him again. I knew, in fact, that it was impossible for you to do so; but I wished you to prove the question to yourself,' he gravely replied.

" 'You knew it! I thought that you inferred it!' I exclaimed.

" 'My inference amounted to moral conviction; moral conviction to positive knowledge.'

"I did not answer him. I scarcely understood him.

" 'What do you propose to do, Elfrida?' he inquired, gravely and tenderly taking my hand, and then adding: 'Whatever it may be, you see me here ready to stand by you, to counsel and assist you to the utmost of my ability.'

" 'Oh! I thank you, Angus!—I thank you with all

my heart and soul! You are indeed a friend and brother raised up to me in the time of need!'

"'I see—I hope I see clearly—that you are wasting no vain regrets on the man who is unworthy of your thoughts,' he said, with a strange look that puzzled me, coming from him. I cannot define the look; I had never seen such a one on his face before, and it troubled me; I answered him:

"'I am not grieving as you see; but we will not talk of Saviola; he is my husband after all, you know.'

"'Ah!' he said, in a sort of equivocal tone that again disturbed me.

"'What shall you do now, Elfrida?—after leaving Geneva, I mean?' he next inquired.

"'I shall go at once to England, cross over to Ireland, and take up my abode at Weirdwaste, where I lived so long before that fatal visit to Brighton.'

"'To—Weirdwaste!' he exclaimed, in some surprise.

"'Yes. It is a poor old manor, but it is my own property in right of my mother, and I shall come into full possession of it as soon as I am of age.'

"'But—to that wild, dreary, solitary home, where you spent so many lonely, secluded, unhappy years. And of which you complained to your brother and myself so bitterly?'

"'Yes. It seemed all that you have described it to be to my wilful and impatient childhood and youth, when I longed to see and know the world. I have seen and known enough, and more than enough, of the world, and now my thoughts turn to Weirdwaste and its quiet life as a haven of rest.'

"'My poor Elfrida! You would wear your young heart out in such a solitude!'

"'No; I would not. I should have my child to occupy and interest me; and I shall have the poor on the estate to look after.'

"These duties could not fill your heart, Elfrida. You would languish into melancholia or death. Listen, Elfrida—dearest Elfrida! You talked of that wild sea-coast manor house as a haven of rest. It would not be so. It would be to you as a desert, a prison, an exile. See, Elfrida! Here is your true haven of rest!' he said, bending toward me with a look that sent all the blood rushing to my head and face.

"'What do you mean? Where?' I cried, in alarm, though I did not understand his meaning.

"'Here!' he exclaimed, striking his breast and then extending both hands toward me—'Here! in my love!—in my arms!—in my bosom! Oh, Elfrida! accept the life's devotion of one who adores you, and who will gladly consecrate all his days to your happiness!'

"I could no longer misunderstand him; nor could I speak for amazement and indignation. He took advantage of my silence to pour out the malaborge of his revolting passion before me.

"At last, with a great effort, I conquered the speechless panic into which his insults had thrown me, and my wrath and shame burst forth in strong and fiery words.

"I ordered him from my presence; but he did not go. I called him hard names—a snake in the grass—a wolf in sheep's clothing, a traitor, a hypocrite.

"He did not reply; he stood up before me and took it all, devouring me with his eyes, while his tongue was silent.

"At length, my paroxysm of violence broke down in tears, and I wept in bitter anguish.

"'Although I am forsaken, yet still I am a wife!' I said; 'though my husband has left me, yet still he is my husband.'

"These words gave him the opportunity he now wanted.

"I had sunk down in my chair and covered my face with my hands.

"He came up to me, laid his hand on the back of my chair, and dropping his voice to the lowest tones of reverential sympathy, he said these terrible words:

" 'No, Elfrida! No, my poor child! It breaks my heart to tell you the truth, that I have only recently learned to my dismay; but you must hear it sooner or later. Better to hear it kindly, tenderly told by a friend's tongue than harshly and suddenly by a wordling's or an enemy's. No, Elfrida! You are no wife.'

" 'Saviola is dead, then!' I exclaimed, in an access of excitement.

" 'No, Elfrida; that is not what I mean. You are no wife, because—you never have been.'

"I lifted my head and gazed on him in dumb horror and amazement.

"He met my look with one of deepest sorrow and commiseration.

" 'It is false!' I cried, as soon as I could speak. 'It is foully, cruelly false!'

" 'I would to Heaven it were!' he sighed. 'I would to Heaven it were!'

"There was something in his look and tone that seemed to force truth and despair into my soul. Had my marriage ceremony been unlawful, notwithstanding Anglesea's pretended carefulness? Or what had happened? How had I been betrayed? I struggled not to believe him—not to question him; but I could not help doing both.

" 'Why do you say such—such——' I had no word strong enough to utter my thought.

"He answered me as if I had done so:

" 'Because I must, Elfrida. I came to Geneva for that purpose. I came from Saviola, charged with a message to you.' He ceased.

"'Go on,' I said. 'Go on.' I was at that moment almost insane. It took all my power of self-control to keep still.

"'I met him in Paris two weeks ago. He told me that he was on the eve of marriage with Mademoiselle de la Villemonte, daughter of the Duc de la Villemonte; that he had not the courage to write and break his connection with you, especially as such writing would be dangerous. It might bring you on to Paris to try to prevent it, which would be awkward. So, he prayed me to take his farewell message to you. I will not insult you, Elfrida, by giving his message.'

"'Yes! Give it! Do not spare me!' I cried out in my agony.

"'Then it was to the effect that he was obliged by circumstances to part with you, but that as soon as he could command the fortune he was to receive with Mademoiselle de la Villemonte, he would make a suitable provision for you and your child.'

"'You heard him say that? You, my brother's friend! And you did not slay him on the spot!' I cried, with all my blood on fire.

"'My dear Elfrida, my scorn, contempt and indignation might have led me to knock the villain down and trample him to death. But, my child, we are all living in civilized Europe and in the nineteenth century, and our education teaches us to subdue the wild beast that is within us. Besides, I had you to think of. If I should slay Saviola and be cast into prison, who would take care of you? Your father and brother, even your old pastor and doctor, were away in the Canaries, and you had not a friend in the world near you.'

"'And I have not now!' I cried, in bitter despair.

"'Do not say that, Elfrida. I lay my life at your feet!'

"'No more of that! Your every word insults me!

And you could come here with a false face and let me write to that man and never tell me what you have only told me now!'

"'My dear Elfrida! Could I burst upon you suddenly with news that, for aught I then knew, might have killed you on the spot, or maddened you for life? No, none but a brute could have done so. I had to feel my way; to lead you slowly up to the truth; to strengthen you to bear it. That is why I allowed you to write to Saviola and to wait for a letter from him. That is why I watched your every tone and look. While doing so I perceived that your happiness did not depend on your union with Saviola.'

"'Tell me this!' I burst out, almost furiously. 'How was it that you, who went ostensibly to guard me against misadventure, became accessory to some deception which rendered that marriage rite performed between me and Saviola of no legal effect? Tell me this, oh, traitor and hypocrite!'"

CHAPTER XXXIII

HOW IT HAPPENED

"My dearest Elfrida, for my beastly stupidity I deserve all the reproaches you can heap upon me. But not the utter reproach of complicity in the deception that was practiced upon you. I never suspected Saviola of a design to deceive you. But the Italian was too deep for me. I went to insure you against mistake, not deception. But, as I say, the Italian was too deep for me.'

"'What do you mean?' I cried.

"'Saviola had studied the route to Scotland, with the design to deceive you. There were two stations on that route of similar names. One was Kelton, in Northum-

berland. The other was Kilton, in Scotland. Saviola took tickets for us all to Kelton, when he made us believe that they were for Kilton. We went by the night train, you remember. We got out at Kelton, near the border on the English side, believing all the time that it was Kilton, on the Scottish side. There, in England, you were married regularly enough; but because it was in England, and you were a minor marrying without the consent of your parents or guardians, therefore the marriage was illegal, null and void.'

"'Did Saviola tell you this when you met in Paris?'

"'Yes, but I had discovered the fact, to my great dismay and distress, before that.'

"'When, and how?'

"'In September I was going up to Scotland for a week's shooting. I went by the same train that had carried us, but in the daytime. When we stopped at Kelton I recognized the station at which we had got out, the hotel where we had stopped for breakfast, and the distant church, with the manse beside it, where the marriage ceremony had been performed. And yet I knew then—as I had not known on that fatal night—that we had not crossed the border.'

"'Then we were married in England?' I wailed.

"'Yes! To settle the point, I asked a fellow passenger how far we were from the Scottish border. He told me just five miles. Still, I did not then suspect Saviola of having wilfully betrayed us. I thought he had confused the two—Kelton and Kilton—and had made a fatal mistake. And I cursed my own stupidity in not having foreseen and prevented it. I determined to seek you both out and have the mistake rectified by another and a regular marriage ceremony as soon as possible. I did not know where to find you, nor of whom to inquire for you, since your friends were all in the Canary Islands. It was by accident only that I

met him in Paris, and learned the truth from his own lips, as I have already told you.'

"He ceased to speak.

"Overwhelmed as I was I tried to make some little stand for my own dignity and self-respect. I said:

" 'The marriage—in spite of quibbles—was a marriage in the sight of God, if not in the sight of man. The good old minister who pronounced the nuptial benediction over two young people who—at that time, at least, loved each other, and who were free to wed—married us as lawfully, as sacredly as all the united state and church could have married us! Repudiated and abandoned as I may be, I am still the wife of Luigi Saviola. And I will be true to myself. Though he has sacrilegiously wedded another woman, he is still my husband, and I will be faithful to him.'

"I had by this time recovered my self-possession, and felt some regret at the paroxysm of emotion into which I had been thrown.

" 'Elfrida,' he said, 'this is sheer fatuity. You have no more right to call yourself the wife of Prince Saviola than you have to call yourself the consort of the czar. You are not a wife. You are free—free to accept the love and devotion that I lay at your feet.'

"I felt my heart rising again in wrath. I did not wish again to lose my self-control. I commanded myself, and, with forced calmness and some sarcasm, inquired:

" 'Do I understand you to be offering me marriage, Mr. Anglesea?'

"He took his hand from the back of my chair, over which he had been leaning, and walked away with a look of petulance and annoyance. Presently he returned to my side, and said:

" 'Dearest Elfrida, men do not offer marriage under these circumstances.'

"I turned and looked him straight in the face as I demanded:

" 'What, then, is it that you do offer your friend's sister?'

"He winced slightly, but answered:

" 'All that a man may offer—under the circumstances—love, devotion, protection. My heart and my fortune. The use of my country seat and town house until—ahem!—such settlements as may secure your future from want. Elfrida, hear me!'

"And again he poured forth a torrent of insults, which pretended to be love, admiration, adoration—what you will, but which were gross insults. When he had talked himself out of breath I only answered:

" 'Mr. Anglesea, you have offended me beyond hope of pardon. Leave my presence at once, and never dare to enter it again.'

"He did not go, but stood there and recommenced his insulting suit.

"I went and put my hand upon the bell.

" 'Will you leave the room, or shall I call the people of the house to put you out?'

" 'Neither, Elfrida. You will hear me,' he said.

"I pulled the cord, and with such effect that a servant quickly entered the room.

" 'Show this gentleman out,' I said.

"The man bowed and held the door open.

" 'Thanks, Fritz. I can find my own way. You needn't wait,' said Anglesea, with cool insolence.

"The man bowed and withdrew.

"Anglesea turned to me with a smile.

"Quick as lightning I formed a resolution and acted upon it. I darted through the door leading into my bedroom, closed it behind me, and shot the bolt to secure myself. I heard him laugh as I dropped breathless into a chair.

"'What is it, madame?' inquired the nurse, who was seated beside my sleeping baby's crib.

"'Nothing,' I answered. And the girl, seeing that I did not mean to be questioned, became silent.

"Soon I heard Anglesea leave the room and walk downstairs.

"A little later on I rang again and gave orders that if the gentleman who had just gone out came again, he was not to be admitted to my apartments.

"Then I began my preparations for leaving Geneva. I clung with all my heart and soul and strength to the conviction that my marriage was sacred. Saviola and myself were both single when we married. The venerable minister of God who united us was most solemnly in earnest when he performed the rites and gave us his benediction. We were married, and no subsequent nuptials of Saviola could affect that undeniable fact.

"Yet—though I felt so sure of the reality and sanctity of our marriage, I was resolved never under any circumstances to be reunited with Saviola so long as a doubt of the fact remained on my mind.

"I would go, as I had planned, to Weirdwaste, and live there with my child, retaining my marriage name and title for the boy's sake as well as for my own.

"I made such progress with my preparations that they were completed by nightfall.

"Anna, my Swiss nursemaid, agreed to go with me to England and remain with me until I could supply her place, when I would pay her expenses back to Geneva.

"After my tea was over that evening, and as Fritz went out with the service, I told him to bring my bill, and have it include the night's lodging and the next morning's breakfast.

"He left to do my errand.

"In half an hour he returned, followed by some one

with a firm footstep. I thought it was Anglesea, and flushed with indignation.

"'A gentleman to see madame,' said the waiter, throwing open the door.

"'Did I not forbid you——' I began, but stopped suddenly and aghast.

"It was my father who stood before me."

CHAPTER XXXIV

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

"YES, it was my father who stood before me.

"He was dressed in deep mourning, and he looked older by twenty years than when I had seen him last. As I gazed on his worn face, on which there was no trace of anger, but only sorrow—I was suddenly smitten with remorse for all I had done to him; wrongs of which I never realized the enormity until now.

"The cry of the prodigal son rose in agony to my lips:

"'Father! forgive me!'

"He opened his arms, and I threw myself within them.

"He folded me to his bosom in sorrow too deep for words, yet I felt that I was forgiven as I sobbed on his shoulder.

"After a few minutes he lifted my head, kissed me, and led me to the sofa.

"When I had dropped upon the cushion he sat down beside me, put his arm protectingly around me, and then he spoke for the first time:

"'It is I who need forgiveness—I who left my poor, motherless little girl for long years to the care of hirelings and eye servants, who betrayed their trust and left

her an easy prey to villainy. Yes, it is I who need forgiveness. Elfrida, my child, can you forgive me?'

"'Oh, father! father! do not speak so to me—to me who sinned against you so grievously—to me who ought to be on my knees at your feet!' I said. And in the excess of remorse that his patient, forgiving words inspired, I would have kneeled to him, but that he stopped me and drew me again to his bosom.

"We spoke no more to each other for a few moments. At last he said, in a broken voice:

"'Did you know—your poor stepmother—was dead, Elfrida?'

"'I thought so, from your mourning dress, papa. I am very sorry for you,' I replied.

"'She passed away in the Canaries, five weeks since. I have the comfort of knowing that everything which human power could do was done for her. I devoted the last twelve years of my life solely to her, going with her wherever there was any hope for benefit. And for this cause I left my poor motherless child exposed to the beasts of prey that infest this world.'

"'Father, dear father, say nothing more of that. I am alive, and since you have forgiven me, I am almost happy again. Dear father, let us live for each other now. I will be the most loving, the most faithful, devoted daughter that ever parent had. I will live for you, father. Only for you—and—and—for my child—my boy.'

"'Your child, Elfrida!' he said, staring at me, while a shiver passed through his frame.

"'Yes, the child of my wilful, unfortunate marriage, dear father. I wrote and told you all about my marriage, but I fear you never got my letter.'

"'No,' he said, with a visible effort to recover from the shock he had received; 'no. I heard of your marriage from other sources, and not until I returned to

England, three weeks ago, with the remains of my wife for interment in the vault at Enderby Castle. The news met me there—terrible news to meet a father coming home to bury his wife.'

"'Oh, my father! Oh, my father! Can you forgive me?' I cried out, at this.

"'I could not forgive myself, child. I never dreamed of blaming you. Does any one blame the bird that is snared?' he tenderly inquired.

"'You are too merciful to me—too merciful. I do not deserve it,' I said, covering my face with my hands, for my father's kind words pierced my heart like poinards.

"'Hush, child; hush. Do not reproach yourself so bitterly. Let me tell you how it was that I did not receive any tidings of your marriage until my return to England.'

"'I know, dear father. It was because you were far away in the Canaries.'

"'That was not all, my child. Listen. While I was still in the archipelago, late in October, I received a batch of letters from England, all bringing me good news of my son and daughter. There was one from you, telling me of your fully restored health and good spirits, and your desire to spend the winter at Brighton. Another from Miss Murray, giving a very flattering account of your progress in education. A third was from Madame de la Champe, much to the same effect.'

"'Those letters were written only three days before my hasty marriage, and, oh! believe me, papa, because I even dreamed of taking such a hasty step,' I earnestly declared.

"'I do believe you, my child. You shall explain later. The same mail brought me a long letter from your brother, who had gone to Eton. He told me of his long summer vacation spent with you at Brighton.

And he corroborated the intelligence given by yourself and your governess as to your health, good spirits and rapid progress. He also asked leave to spend the Christmas holidays with you at Brighton.

"Here I sighed so heavily that my father stopped, and laid his hand on mine in sympathy, while he resumed:

" 'All these letters gave me great satisfaction, on account of my dear children. They were especially comforting to me at that time, as I was about to leave the archipelago for the Canaries. I did not notice then that Glennon had omitted to say one word about his own health, which was always delicate, he having inherited the constitution of his mother.'

" 'He looked well when he left Brighton,' I ventured to say.

" 'Yes; but he did not continue well after resuming his studies. The same mail that brought me his letter brought one from one of the physicians at Eton. I had overlooked all my other correspondence in dwelling upon the letters from my children; but at length I took up one in a strange handwriting which, on opening, proved to be from the physician who had been attending my son for some seemingly slight disorder in his health. This Dr. Fletcher wrote to me to say that the state of my son's health was such that Glennon should leave Tton and have a thorough change of air, scene and diet. He suggested that he should have a traveling tutor, and go to a warmer and drier climate.'

" 'I had heard that he went with you to the Canaries,' I said.

" 'Yes,' continued my father, 'I quickly made up my mind in regard to Glennon. I wrote to my two old friends, Dr. Alexander and the Rev. Mr. Clement, asking them if they could procure substitutes to fill their places at Weirdwaste, and accompany us to the Canaries

for the winter—the one to take charge of the young viscount's health, and the other to direct his studies in a very moderate manner.'

"'I heard, too, that the doctor and the vicar joined your party,' I said.

"'Yes; though I scarcely ventured to hope that they would. And really I was as much surprised as pleased when I received letters from them accepting my offer and promising—according to my request, in case of their acceptance—to go to Eton, join my son and accompany him to Gibraltar, and there await the arrival of our steamer.'

"My father paused for a few moments, looked at me remorsefully, and said:

"'I little knew how I was about to leave my dear, only daughter; my poor, motherless girl! We sailed early in November. But before sailing I answered your letter and those of your teachers, expressing the great satisfaction I felt in your improved health and good progress, thanking your teachers for all their—supposed—zeal and care, and telling you that you should winter at Brighton while we were at the Canaries.'

"'Oh! I never saw that letter, father! I had gone on my mad journey before that letter came!' I said.

"'I know it now, my dear! I did not know it then, when I said in cheerful confidence that I had left you so safe and happy. At Gibraltar your brother, with the vicar and the doctor, joined us; and in a few days we sailed for Santa Cruz de Teneriffe. Where were you then, my dear?'

"'I was in Paris—anxiously waiting for an answer to the letter I had written you, announcing my marriage and asking your forgiveness.'

"'A letter which I missed by leaving the Grecian Archipelago before it arrived.'

"'And, oh, how long, in my ignorance—how long I waited and hoped to hear from you!'

"'As I waited and hoped to hear from you—not understanding your silence. After we had been some weeks settled at Santa Cruz, I began to be seriously uneasy at not hearing from you, as I had especially requested you, in my last letter, to direct your answer to Santa Cruz de Teneriffe. But the countess urged that you would probably wait to hear of our arrival before writing. Then I wrote to you and waited for an answer; none came. Then I wrote to the postmaster at Brighton for information, and in due time received an answer that your whole party had left the town, without leaving any directions at the post office where letters should be forwarded. This I attributed to carelessness on your teachers' part and inexperience on yours.'

"'I left too suddenly and too madly to have thought of such a provision—and I know not how my governesses left after they discovered my flight.'

"'I know how they left, but I did not learn until later. From the postmaster's imperfect information I judged that you had returned to Weirdwaste. There I addressed my next letters, with no more success than had attended all the others. I received no answer. I was uneasy, but not anxious. I thought that you were living under the care of your teachers at Weirdwaste. And I hoped, from week to week, to hear from you, and ascribed my disappointment to any other cause than the real one—to negligence, to irregular mails, and so forth.'

"'And all that time I was going from city to city with my husband, leaving always directions where my letters should be forwarded, and hoping always to hear from you.'

"'Ah, well, my dear, we were at cross-purposes without knowing it. The summer came, but brought no increase of health to my poor wife. She grew worse, and

my great anxiety on her account began to absorb all my thoughts. I ceased even to look for a letter from England.'

"'I understand, dear father; the present and real calamity dulled your sensibilities to imaginary troubles.'

"'In a measure and for a time; but at length I wrote to the steward at Weirdwaste to ask why I did not hear from you or your teachers. But, ah! before there was time for an answer to return my poor wife died, and I got ready to bring her remains to England.'

"'My dear father!'

"'I took the casket first to Enderby, where, having been previously embalmed, it lay in state in the drawing room. The funeral was advertised for the eighth day after the arrival of the body, and I used the interval in going quietly down to Liverpool and taking steamer to Ireland en route for Weirdwaste, to fetch my daughter on to Enderby for the funeral. It was at Weirdwaste that the news of your marriage first met me.'

"'Oh, father! But you have pardoned me! And so they knew nothing of it at Enderby?'

"'No, my dear. Consider the remoteness of each of these seats from the busy world, and their distance from each other—Enderby on the northwest coast of Northumberland—Weirdwaste on the west coast of Ireland. No, my dear, no hint of your marriage had reached Enderby, nor would it ever have reached Weirdwaste but for one circumstance.'

"'And that, my father?'

"'Was the fact of your oldest governess, Miss Murray, having left a portion of her effects at Weirdwaste. The old lady wrote to the steward, telling him of your sudden marriage, and of the consequent cessation of her services, and requesting him to forward her effects—of which she inclosed a list—to a certain address in London. Though the steward and the housekeeper both

wrote to the governess—when they sent her boxes—imploring her to give them more particulars of their beloved young lady, she gave them none, merely saying in the letter in which she acknowledged the receipt of her property that you had married and had gone away—more than that she said she knew nothing.'

"I bowed my head in sorrow. I realized what my dear, stricken father must have felt to hear such news at such a time. But I know he never, even in thought, reproached me.

" 'I made every inquiry, but could learn no more at Weirdwaste. I went back to Northumberland—to Enderby—and remained until after the funeral of my dear wife. Then I went down to Brighton to make inquiries there. I found the house where you had lodged—to which all my letters had been directed—but the landlady could tell me nothing more than that the young lady had been missed one day, and that at the end of the same week the two old ladies had given up their apartments and had gone to London. And that, subsequently, she had heard a report that the young lady had gone off to Scotland, with "the Italian," to be married; but she did not know the truth of the matter.'

" 'I do not know how the report could have got out, except through my teachers.'

" 'Of course it was through them. When I could hear no more I went up to London to transact some business with my banker. I did not like to ask any direct questions of him concerning you; nor did I have any strong hope of hearing news of you in that quarter. Nevertheless, when our accounts had been overhauled, I did venture to remark:

" ' "My daughter has not drawn on you of late, I perceive."

" ' "Not for a year," he said; "and that reminds me," he continued, "that I had a letter from her highness,

last summer, inquiring your lordship's address—I believe it was from Geneva. I cannot lay my hands on it at this time, but—yes, I am sure it was from Geneva."

"'How glad I am that I wrote that letter! The banker's prompt reply was the first clew I got to your whereabouts, as the banker's news was the first clew you got to mine.'

"'Yes, my dear. I did not ask a question, burning as I was to hear more of you. How could I ask that comparative stranger for information respecting my daughter, with whose movements I should have been perfectly familiar? I did not even know why he called you "her highness." I left England that same afternoon, and came as fast as steam could bring me to Geneva. Here I am! But I do not even know the name of your husband.'

"Again I dropped my head upon my breast. I had so much to tell him, besides the name of my husband. But he was waiting patiently for my reply. I gave it."

CHAPTER XXXV

A SHOCK

"'Prince Luigi Saviola.'

"He stared at me in surprise, in distress.

"'Prince Luigi Saviola!' he echoed, without withdrawing his fixed gaze from my face.

"'Yes, dear father,' I answered, wondering at the emotion, or rather at the panic, into which my words had thrown him.

"'Oh, my poor child! Oh, my dear child! And here you have been controlling and concealing your own great sorrow to listen to me and to sympathize with my lighter

ones. Oh, my poor Elfrida! My poor, poor girl!' he breathed at last, with a voice full of distress and compassion that I felt sure he must have heard of Saviola's Parisian marriage, and was grieving over it more than I was for myself. I felt that I must try to comfort him.

"'Do not take it to heart, dear father,' I said. 'Look at me! I do not appear to be dying of despair, do I? Do not grieve for me, since I do not grieve for myself. Let us, from time to time, live for each other. You, dear, dear father! have had a great sorrow which you bear like a Christian. I have had a humiliating disappointment and a wholesome lesson; though like most of the teachings of experience, the lesson comes too late to do the pupil any good. But from this time I will forget my trouble and live for you.'

"He was still staring at me with more wonder and amazement than before.

"'I had not the remotest suspicion that it was Luigi Saviola whom you had married,' he murmured, as if speaking to himself. Then after another long, speculating look at me, he inquired:

"'Elfrida, my darling, how came you to marry this young man—was your act a mere whim, a childish freak, or could you really have loved him?'

"I saw by his whole manner that there was some afterthought in my father's mind that I did not comprehend; but I answered him:

"'I thought I loved him; but in my ignorance and inexperience I must have been misled by fancy and imagination to mistake admiration and enthusiasm for love; but the hallucination was strong enough to make me forget every duty I should have remembered and held sacred.'

"'Tell me all about your courtship and marriage, Elfrida!' he said.

"And then I told him, as faithfully as I have set it

down here for you, Abel, every particular—of Saviola's introduction to me; of the growth of our acquaintance and its development into that false hero-worship which I mistook for love; of our runaway marriage, in which Angus Anglesea aided as my guardian, saying that since he had no power to prevent the marriage he would see that it was solemnized legally and properly.

"'God bless the boy!' broke in my father, with so much fervor that I had not heart to tell him afterward what a villain Anglesea had proved himself—in the sequel—to be.

"Then I told him of our travels; of my letters of contrition to him; of my disappointments in not hearing from him; of the gradual opening of my eyes to the true character of my husband; of my grief, wonder and humiliation at discovering that my imaginary hero, martyr, patriot, humanitarian, was no better than a professional gambler and adventurer! Still, though his life degraded himself and me, though I could no longer adore and worship him as I had done when I believed in him—still I bore with him because I really thought that he loved me, that with all his faults he was faithful to me. In this belief I lived and hoped until the end came. Then, indeed, the last scales fell from my eyes. I know that if he had ever loved me, he had ceased to do so now.

"'Poor fellow!' murmured my father, as if he judged Saviola much more leniently than I could do. And again the impression came to me that there was an afterthought lurking in his mind, incomprehensible to mine.

"'Why do you pity him, father dear? I should think you would feel nothing but resentment and animosity to him.'

"'My dear, when one has seen so much suffering as I have, one must learn mercy. He ran away with my daughter and married her, to be sure; but he was young

and in love, and you were living only with careless governesses. I could have forgiven him. He took to the gaming table until hazard became the passion of his life. He was lucky in cards, but I never heard that he was dishonest. And—without knowing his near relations to you and myself—I have heard a good deal of him lately.'

"'Father, you seem to be really defending him.'

"'Am I, my dear? Then it is because he can no longer defend himself.'

"'No; for his conduct is utterly indefensible.'

"'What conduct, my child?'

"'My dear father, with all that you have heard of him lately, you cannot have heard of the shocking event at Paris.'

"'Yes, my dear, I have heard it all—though I did not know at the time that he was your husband.'

"'And now that you do know it, what do you think of all this, sir?'

"'I think, my dear, that it is strange in you, and incomprehensible to me, that you should feel no regret for the young man's tragic fate, nor wear one sign of mourning for him who was your husband. I think, my dear, that in this you should pay some respect to death, if not to the dead,' he gravely replied.

"It was now my turn to stare at him.

"'Father!' I exclaimed; 'I do not comprehend. What tragic fate? Who is dead? Not Luigi! I heard of him only yesterday!'

"'Heard of him? Heard of whom? Not Saviola? Is it possible that you do not know?'

"'Know what, sir? I know nothing, it seems. What do you mean, dear father?'

"'Is it possible that you do not know Prince Luigi Saviola fell in a duel with the Duc de Montmeri, nearly two months ago!'

"'Great Heaven! No, I knew nothing of all that. Oh, poor Luigi! Poor Luigi!' I covered my face with my hands and fell back in my chair.

"'And you knew nothing of all this?'

"'Nothing, nothing!' I moaned.

"'And yet the papers were full of the subject.'

"'I never saw any papers after Luigi left me. I was expecting my child every day, and I lived very secluded, so that I heard no rumors—until very lately a report met me that he was on the eve of marriage with a French heiress,' I said, remembering the tale told me by Anglesea.

"'Strange that such a report as that should get afloat about a young man whose fate was well known all over Europe, and filled all hearers with compassion and sympathy.'

"'Tell me of the duel, father! Tell me all you know,' I said.

"'It arose at a gentlemen's dinner, given by one of the Bonapartes. The talk turned on women, and drifted into the comparative merits of women of different European nationalities. The Duc de Montmeri, who had taken too much wine, made some injurious and sneering remarks on Italian women. The prince warmly took up the defense of his fair compatriots. High words ensued. The quarrel ended in the challenge of Saviola by Montmeri. They met the next morning in a secluded spot in the Rouveret. Montmeri was a professional duelist and a dead shot. Saviola fell at the first fire. It was a murder—no less. When his second went to raise his head the dying man only breathed forth three words—"My poor wife"—and died. Little did I think when I read these words that the poor wife in question was my own daughter.'

"'Oh, Luigi! Poor Luigi! And to think that I should have listened to such cruel slanders of you and

cherished such bitter thoughts of you!' I exclaimed, in sudden remorse at the remembrance of the ready credence I had given to the story of his second marriage told me by Anglesea.

"'And you really knew nothing of this fatal duel until I told you about it?' again demanded my father.

"'Nothing, I assure you. But remember how secluded I have lived here, seeing no one but my infant boy, my nurse and my maid—except, indeed, my physician, who came daily for weeks, but who would not have been likely to speak to me of the duel, even if he had read of it, which he might not have done, you know.'

"'Well, my love, you should now put on widow's mourning for your deceased husband,' said my father, looking gravely into my face."

CHAPTER XXXVI

"TELL ME ALL"

"'I AM not sure that I have the right to do so,' I answered, dropping my head on my bosom.

"'You do not know whether you have any right to do so? What do you mean, Elfrida? Are we still at cross-purposes, my dear? Or what new enigma is this?' he demanded, uneasily.

"'Father, I fear that a fatal mistake was made in the manner of our marriage. I fear that mistake may render it illegal. I will have no concealments from you. Therefore, I must tell you even this. Once I was led to believe that Saviola made no mistake, but purposely left the train with me, on the English side of the border, where our marriage without your consent would have been unlawful; but now since I have learned that the

report of this French marriage was false, I now believe that the report of his wilful deception of me in regard to the place of our marriage was also false, and that he ignorantly made the fatal mistake.'

"'My dear girl! My dear Elfrida! What do you mean? What fatal mistake do you mean?'

"'I have already indicated it, my dear father. But I will tell you more distinctly,' I said.

"And then I told him of the two stations on the road with similarly sounding names—Kelton, on the English side, within five miles of the border, and Kilton, on the Scottish side, just across the border. 'Intending to be married at the last-mentioned place, we got out of the train by misadventure at the first, and we were married in England.'

"'What disastrous carelessness!' he groaned.

"'But, father, we both acted in good faith, and were married by an ordained clergyman, and had our marriage duly recorded and witnessed. I do, for myself, feel that our marriage was lawful and sacred as if we had been united in the presence of all our relations, by the combined powers of church and state. Still it is for you to decide. I have concealed nothing from you, my dear father. I have now told you all. I leave my fate and my conduct in your hands. Shall I live on as the widowed Princess Saviola, or what shall I do?'

"'My dear Elfrida, I must think of it. I must have time to decide. This is a complication, an embarrassment for which, dear child, I was not at all prepared. No, do not look distressed, child. I do not blame you.'

"'Before you came I had made up my mind to leave Geneva and return to Ireland and take up my abode at Weirdwaste, where you yourself had fixed my home. Although I believed then that my husband had repudiated the ceremony performed at Kelton, deserted me and married a French heiress, still I had determined

to stand by my marriage, to call myself by my husband's name, and to live in seclusion at Weirdwaste and devote myself to the education of my son and to the care of the poor. Such was the plan of life I had laid out for myself before your arrival, my dear father. Indeed, my trunks are already packed and my hotel bill paid up to noon to-morrow. But now I place myself in your hands most gladly, and I will abide by your judgment.'

"'You could not do better, my dear. One part of your plan may be carried out at once. We will leave this place to-morrow morning for England, but not for Ireland—not for Weirdwaste—rather for a little place of mine to which you have never been; because, in fact, it was leased for twenty-one years, and the lease will only expire on the last day of December.'

"'You mean Myrtle Grove, on the south coast?'

"'Yes, dear. I have given orders that as soon as it is vacated it is to be put in complete order. I intended to live there in strict seclusion. I did not know that I should have the comfort of my dear daughter's society. For the present, that will be better than Weirdwaste for you, my child.'

"I could not but agree with my father in this view of the case.

"Then, as it was growing late, I rang for supper, which was promptly served in my sitting room.

"I asked my father if he had engaged apartments for the night.

"He told me that he had not; that he had set out from the railway station to find me first, having left all his luggage in charge of his valet at the station. But he said that he would attend to the matter immediately after supper, which he did.

"He succeeded in procuring rooms in the same house and in the same corridor with me. Then he sent a mes-

senger from the hotel to the station to fetch his valet with the luggage.

"When these arrived he bade me good-night, and retired to his apartment.

"He had not seen my beautiful boy, nor had he asked to see him; nor had I the courage to propose to show him.

"Now I felt a little grieved at this neglect of my innocent child.

"Early the next morning we left Geneva, and traveling as fast as steam could carry us by land and sea, in due time we reached London. We put up at one of the quietest hotels at the West End. Here my father insisted that I should pay off my French maid and my Swiss nurse, and send each back to her own country.

"When they were gone, he said:

" 'And now we take leave of the Princess Saviola forever, and we know only Lady Elfrida Glennon.'

" 'But my boy, dear father—my boy!' I pleaded.

" 'A proper nurse must be procured for the child without delay—some healthy young married woman living in the country, who will take the whole charge of the boy before we leave London. He is the child of a deceased son of mine, and so delicate that he must be reared in the country, and fed on fresh milk and fresh air.'

" 'And—must I part with my child, oh, father?' I pleaded.

" 'For a time you must—for his sake as well as for your own. What should Lady Elfrida Glennon do with a young child at Myrtle Grove?'

"I would have pleaded with him, but I saw at a glance that it was useless to do so. Kind, tender, gentle, yielding as my father was in most cases, yet when he once made up his mind to any course his will was as strong as fate. Besides, I and my child were both in his power.

I had no other alternative than to obey him. And, finally, notwithstanding the pain I felt in parting from my boy, I could not fail to see that, under the circumstances, it was best for the child, and best for us all, that he should be put out to be nursed.

"I took the sole charge of the child while we were seeking for a nurse. We had many applications, but I was hard to please. At length the right woman came; a fine, fresh, young creature, with a plump form, bright eyes, rosy cheeks, a pleasant smile, and a sweet voice. She attracted me at sight. She was the wife of a young dairyman. She had one child, a week older than my boy; and she was well able to nurse twins, if Heaven had sent twins to her. She was willing and anxious to take our little orphan. She invited us to go down into Kent and see for ourselves the comfort and cleanliness of the dairy farm, and the health and liveliness of her own child.

"We took her at her word and went home with her—only a few miles from London—and we were so well satisfied with all we found there that we concluded it would be difficult to do as well, and impossible to do better, anywhere else; and we left the baby with her, with a check for twenty-five pounds, that was to be renewed quarterly.

"I may here say that this young woman, Mary Chester, did her full duty by her nurseling, as I found in my periodical visits to the dairy.

"As soon as Myrtle Grove was ready for occupation, my father took me down there.

"It was a comparatively small place, but a lovely, secluded home, in a deep, green, wooded glen, about three miles inland from the sea.

"Here we lived a very quiet life, seeing no one but the vicar, the Rev. Mr. Ashe, of St. Agnes' Church, the

country practitioner, Dr. Ray, and the country lawyer, Mr. Flood, who was my father's local man of business.

"We were both in deep mourning for my stepmother, and that fact justified our seclusion from the world.

"Once my brother came down from Eton to spend the Easter holidays. He had never heard of my runaway match, and my father decided that he never should hear of it.

"Once a month my father took me to the dairy farm in Kent to see his grandchild—the child of his deceased son,' as he called my boy, and as the people at the dairy cottage believed him to be.

" 'And it is no falsehood, Elfrida, my dear. The lad is my grandchild, and is the child of my deceased son-in-law'—he said. Our deep mourning was supposed by the dairy people to be worn for this same deceased son and brother.

"Looking back, I think I had never before spent so calm, peaceful and contented a time as at Myrtle Grove."

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DAWN OF A BRIGHTER DAY

"We liked Myrtle Grove so well that we made it our home for three years. Its quiet beauty seemed so soothing and restful after the terrible grandeur of Enderby Castle and the mournful desolation of Weirdwaste. I had a little school of poor children, and a small number of aged and invalid cottagers, whose necessities gave me interest and occupation.

"My father was now a recluse and a student, passing most of his time in the small library among his favorite authors, or, if the weather was very fine, sitting in his

leather chair under one of the trees in the thickly shaded grounds at the back of the house, with a book in his hand.

"My brother came every Christmas and every midsummer to spend his vacation with us. As I mentioned before, he knew nothing of my short, disastrous marriage, and was to know nothing of it.

"His talk, when he was at home, was full of Angus Anglesea, his one dear friend. When he was praising this hypocrite I was forced to make some excuse to get out of the room, or to keep a painful silence in it, for I could not contradict him or expose Anglesea's villainy to me without betraying facts that it was desirable should be kept from him.

"Even my father, who knew now every circumstance attending my imprudent marriage, knew nothing of Anglesea's insulting proposal to me. Pride, delicacy and consideration for that dear father's feelings prevented me from telling him. Yet I made him understand that, under my peculiar circumstances, I did not want any visitors, especially gentlemen visitors, at Myrtle Grove—of course always excepting the vicar, the doctor, the lawyer and my dear brother, who could scarcely, indeed, be called a visitor.

"In this manner, without having to mention Anglesea's name, I kept my brother's dear friend from coming to Myrtle Grove.

"Before the commencement of every vacation, undaunted by previous refusals, Glennon would write from his college, and ask leave to bring his friend home with him.

"My father would then bring the letter to me, and ask my opinion. I would always tell him—what was the truth—that my soul shrank from visitors.

"And he would write something to the same effect in his reply to Glennon.

"My brother took this very hard, and on his arrival at home would always complain that it was—in schoolboy slang—'a jolly shame' he could not have Anglesea to spend the holidays with him as he had always been accustomed to do.

"He said that he did not know what had come over 'Friday.' She had been very fond of Anglesea when they were at Brighton together. So fond of him that he —Glennon—had hoped Anglesea might one day be his brother-in-law, as he was now his brother in heart.

"I said nothing in self-defense at all, but left it to my father to explain—what he assumed to be the truth—that I had no especial objection to Anglesea, but that the state of my health unfitted me to entertain company.

"This generally satisfied him, at least for the time being.

"At length, when little more than three years had passed, my father began to grow weary of our long seclusion from the world, and proposed that we should make another tour of the Continent—avoiding as much as possible the crowded resorts of tourists and betaking ourselves to quieter scenes.

"I consented to this, as I did to every plan proposed by my father. I made but one condition. The Easter holidays were approaching, and my brother was expected to come to Myrtle Grove to spend the time with us as usual. I therefore proposed to my father that Glennon should now invite his friend to accompany him to Myrtle Grove, while I myself should go for a week and take lodgings at the dairyman's cottage in Kent, where my child was at nurse.

"You may wonder why I should have done this, knowing the character of Anglesea as I did. I have sometimes wondered at the same act. But I think it was from affection for Glennon I acted. I knew how he longed to have Anglesea with him at Myrtle Grove. I wished to

gratify that longing. I knew that nothing I could do could either cement or sever the bonds of that strong friendship. I knew also that Anglesea never had and never would show his cloven foot to Glennon, or that even if he should do so, Glennon would never tolerate it; he would fly from it. I felt instinctively that Anglesea could never harm my brother.

"More than willingly, gladly, my father agreed to my plan. He wanted to gratify his son. So I wrote immediately to see if I could obtain lodgings, 'for change of air,' at the dairy farm. In good time came a favorable answer.

"Then my father wrote to Glennon, authorizing him to invite his friend to spend the Easter holidays with him at Myrtle Grove.

"I did not wait for the arrival of the visitor, but on the Wednesday before Easter I set out alone for Kent, meaning to engage some country girl in the neighborhood of the dairy to wait on me while in lodgings.

"I reached the dairy about four o'clock on that Wednesday afternoon, and found my son, now a fine boy over three years old, in the rosiest health and most boisterous spirits. He sprang into his 'auntie's' arms and covered her with caresses before he began to search her pockets and her hand bag for the sweetmeats and toys she was accustomed to bring him.

"A dainty tea table was waiting for me in a charming cottage parlor. So Mary Chester coaxed my 'nephew' from his 'auntie's' arms and showed me into a clean, neat, fresh bedroom, snow white, as all delectable bedrooms were in the days before the 'decoration' craze spread over the land. There I laid off my bonnet and washed off the railroad dust.

"And then I returned to the parlor, where my 'nephew' was allowed to join me at the tea table, sitting up in a high armchair.

"That night Mary Chester waited on me as lady's maid, but the next day I procured the country girl I had been thinking of.

"I spent a really happy week at the dairy with my child and his foster-brother. These two children were so fond of each other that it was a comfort and delight to me to think of them together.

"Mary Chester had no other children, and she was entirely devoted to them. John Chester, her husband, was a fine, wholesome, honest young man, bearing an excellent character in the neighborhood. We all went to the parish house together on Easter Sunday, leaving the two baby boys at home in charge of Mary Chester's grandmother, who was too infirm to sit through the long church service, but who was quite equal to the care of two children for a few hours.

"As Easter week drew to a close I began to think of returning to Myrtle Grove.

"But I did not leave the dairy until I received a letter from my father, informing me that the visitors had departed.

"Then I loaded my little son, his foster-brother and his attendants with presents suited to the conditions of each. I returned heartfelt thanks to Mary Chester for her excellent care of my 'nephew,' and paid her six months in advance.

"Finally, on the Thursday after Easter, I bade them all good-by and set out to return to Myrtle Grove.

"I found my father in excellent health, but impatient to start on our journey.

"I hurried my preparations, and two days after we left England for Germany, where it was my fate first to meet you, Abel Force, who made all the happiness of my life."

CHAPTER XXXVIII

NEW LIFE

"We avoided the 'highways' and public resorts of travel—the grand railway lines, the great cities, the famous spas, the big hotels, and we sought out the by-ways—unfrequented hamlets and villages on mountain heights or in forest depths, as yet undiscovered by the eyes, unprofaned by the feet of speculators.

"We had seen enough of the splendor and magnificence of Europe; we wished to see some of its real, working life.

"Yes, we wished to lose ourselves and find repose in obscurity.

"Yet where can one go and avoid fate? Or where, let me ask you, Abel, can we travel and not meet an American tourist?

"You remember the day and the place of our first meeting. It was on a glorious afternoon in July, when the sun was sinking in the west and kindling all the horizon into a conflagration. We were in a little chalet at the foot of the mountain. We had come out to view the magnificence of the sunset. The cowherd was penning his cattle; the shepherd was folding his sheep.

"Coming down the mountain path we saw a solitary tourist, knapsack on back and alpenstock in hand.

"That was my first sight of you, Abel; a tall, athletic, black-bearded man, whom we all first took for a Tyrolesian.

"You came up to the door of the chalet, raised your hat to us and asked the cottagers if you could have a night's lodging.

"Do you remember, Abel? Of course you could be

accommodated—roughly; we were all 'roughing it' for the time being.

"So our acquaintance began.

"That night you introduced yourself to us by name and nationality—Abel Force, of Maryland, United States; and when my father, in return, named himself and me your face brightened. You told him that on leaving America you had brought letters of introduction—among which was one from your late minister to St. James, addressed to the Earl of Enderby. These letters were all with your luggage at your hotel at Berne, where you had left them to come on this pedestrian excursion to the mountain. You added that you had missed Lord Enderby in England and learned that he was traveling on the Continent; that you deemed yourself strangely fortunate in having thus met him, and would present your credentials in the form of the ex-minister's letter, as soon as we should reach Berne.

"The next day we all returned to Berne in company—you, at my father's invitation, taking a seat in our carriage.

"At the Bernerhof Hotel we stopped but one night. There you found and presented your letter—to prove that you were no impostor, you said. You joined our company and traveled where we traveled, and stopped where we stopped.

"Why should I repeat this to you, you know it already?

"Only because it is a visible link in the chain of our destiny.

"That long summer, Abel, we spent together! That long summer, every day of which drew our hearts nearer and nearer! Even my father, who was ever most reserved to all but oldest friends and nearest kin, came to love you like a son.

"I—feeling then, for the first time, all the bitter sig-

nificance of my own antecedents—resisted the sweet influence that was flowing into my soul, yet—resisted it in vain!

"You know how silently our love grew, during those delightful weeks and months we lived and traveled together.

"I knew then, though we might never marry in this world, even as I know now—though this confession may part us for this earth—that we are mates for all eternity.

"There came a day, at last, when we were all in the ancient city of Grenada, that you went to my father and asked his consent to win me for your wife. He told you that he would have a talk with me first, and then give you an answer.

"My father came to me and told me all that had passed between himself and you, and of your proposal for my hand, and he asked me how I felt disposed toward 'Mr. Force.'

"Oh! the bitter sweet of that moment.

"I told my father I felt so well disposed toward you, that but for my past calamity and its living evidence I should accept your hand.

"Oh, Abel! my answer did not express the hundredth part of the love, the joy and the sorrow that strove in my heart at the time; but I had to control myself and speak quietly, almost indifferently, in the presence of my father.

"He replied by assuring me that he should approve my marriage with Mr. Force; that as for my calamity, it was no crime, no fault of mine, but the result of circumstances—that I was so perfectly and unquestionably innocent that I might tell the whole story to Mr. Force without losing a degree of his love and esteem.

"At that I became very much alarmed. I declared to my father that I should die on the spot if ever my suitor should be told the story of my humiliation; for

under such circumstances I could not look him in the face and live.

"My father attempted to argue with me, to call me morbid, my thoughts and feelings extravagant, exaggerated; but the violence of my agitation bore him down and silenced him at last.

" 'What am I to say to Force?' he inquired.

" 'Tell him anything you like—except the story of my fall—or that I can accept his suit.'

" 'You refuse him, then?'

" 'I must.'

"My father left me.

"I kept my room the whole of that day.

"On the next day I went down to the sitting room we three occupied in common. I certainly did not expect to find you there, Abel Force; yet there you were, looking a little graver than usual, but otherwise behaving as if nothing unusual had been said or done. You bade me good-morning, handed me a chair, and inquired after my health.

"Well, though to my surprise I found you in our sitting room that morning, I certainly expected you to leave our party on the first opportunity. But you did not. You remained with us and traveled with us as before.

"I shrank from speaking to my father on the subject, yet at length I summoned courage to ask him if he had given my answer to you. He replied that he had, and that you had said you could wait and hope.

"We spent the autumn together, as we had spent the summer; yet, Abel, we were not happy, and as the time for our return to England and your return to America approached, and we were to separate to meet no more in this world, we both grew more and more miserable. As for me, my heart seemed wasting to death.

"One day in November my father came to me, and said:

" 'Elfrida, do you consider me a man of honor, or not?'

" 'My dear father, what a question!' was all that I could answer.

" 'But tell me, do you consider me a man of honor? Yes, or no!'

" 'Yes, my dear father; yes. A man of the most perfect and most unquestionable honor,' I replied.

" 'Good! Then perhaps you will believe me and act upon my words. Elfrida, Mr. Force has this morning begged me to speak for him again. Again he offers you his hand.'

" 'Well, my dear father?'

" 'Well, Elfrida, he loves you, and you know it. You love him, and he knows it. You are both dying for each other, and I know that.'

" 'Well, my dear father?' I said again.

" 'Have pity on him and on yourself, and accept his suit.'

" 'But my past—my past—which I can never tell him—never! I could die first.'

" 'Elfrida, do you believe your father to be a man of honor?' he inquired, for the third time.

" 'Dear sir, how can you ask me? I have said, "a man of indubitable honor," ' I replied.

" 'Very well, then. On the truth of a man, on the honor of a peer, on the faith of a Christian, I swear to you, Elfrida, that you may marry Force without telling him one word of your past trouble,' he said to me, so solemnly that I could not question him. I could only receive his words on the high and sacred ground on which he had spoken them.

"Oh, Abel! was I wrong?

"'I am now going to send Force to see you,' he repeated, as he left the room.

"Two minutes after that you came to me, and before you left my side I was your promised wife. Oh, Abel! was I wrong? Was my father misled by his love for his child? Was I deceived by my love for you? Oh, Abel! was I wrong? I knew my father's strict, punctilious sense of honor. I had seen many instances of it. He had been a wealthier man had he been a less fastidiously honorable one. How could I believe that he would sanction a dishonorable concealment of my story, even to secure my own happiness?

"I could not believe this of my father. And yet I doubted—I doubted. And this concealment never did secure my happiness, but has burdened and darkened and sickened my soul for twenty years.

"You remember it was arranged that we should be married at Myrtle Grove.

"We all went to London together. You took apartments at Langham's. We went down to Myrtle Grove, where you were to meet us, a fortnight later, for the wedding.

"And what did I do at Myrtle Grove? Prepare for my wedding?

"No! I passed but one day there, and then I hurried down into Kent and to the dairy farm to see my boy, whom I had not seen for many months.

"I carried loads of toys, pets, sweetmeats, presents of all sorts—ah! as if gifts could compensate a child for family recognition, for mother's love.

"I found the boy in high health, happy in his surroundings, in his foster-parents' affections, and in his foster-brother's companionship. I spent nearly the whole fortnight preceding my marriage with my child in Kent.

"Two days before the one appointed for the wedding I took leave of my boy, half heartbroken at the forced

separation, yet comforted with the knowledge that he at least was well and happy, and that he would be faithfully nursed by Mary Chester, and carefully looked after by my father, who had promised to adopt and educate him, and to bring him to see me at intervals.

"I returned to Myrtle Grove, having made no preparations for our marriage, which you know was a strictly private one at the parish church, with only my father to give me away, and my brother and the parish clerk for witnesses.

"After the wedding, you remember, we took leave of my dear father, who promised to visit us the ensuing spring, but who never kept his promise, because he died suddenly of heart disease during that winter."

CHAPTER XXXIX

A CLOUDED HONEYMOON

"We went down to Liverpool and sailed for America, to commence our new life on your Maryland plantation.

"But, oh, Abel! with a burden of sorrow and remorse on my heart and conscience which has oppressed and darkened all my days.

"In the first winter of our marriage news came to us of my father's death, and we mourned him deeply, as you know. Added to grief for his loss was anxiety for the fate of the child he had promised to adopt and educate. No news came to me of my boy. I knew not even if the quarterly payments had been kept up. When we went to Baltimore, however, to buy my mourning outfit, I took the opportunity to send a bill of exchange for a hundred pounds to Mary Chester on account, and asked her to send me news of the boy, and to direct her letter

to Bryantown, to which place I intended to go, and I did go at intervals, in hope to find a letter, but none ever came.

"In the spring I received a terrible shock. Report came that a schooner had been wrecked on the shore, and that but one life had been saved—the life of a child who had been washed up on the sands and found there living.

"This child I heard was at the house of Miss Bayard, who was taking care of him.

"I went—as everybody went—from curiosity to see the little waif.

"There happened to be no visitor at the house when I entered Miss Bayard's parlor. She was talkative, as usual, and told me all about the wreck and rescue as it is known to you and to all that community. And she took me into the bedroom adjoining the parlor to look upon the sleeping boy.

"There he lay upon the clean patchwork quilt, crosswise upon the bed, his flaxen head upon the snowy pillow, a gray woolen shawl spread over him.

"I approached and stooped to look at his face.

"Heaven of heavens!

"Think—think what I must have felt on recognizing my own child!

"Surprise, delight, wonder, terror—all shook me in turns as I gazed.

" 'Eh, ma'am! I don't wonder it gives you a turn! It did me, I tell you!' the good woman whispered, as she stood beside me.

"In a tumult of emotion I withdrew from the room. I was afraid the child might open his eyes and see me, and I knew as surely as I had recognized him would the little one remember me, and call me by my name as soon as he should set eyes upon me.

"I was afraid to stay any longer, or to ask any more

questions, lest I should in some manner betray myself. I took leave of Miss Bayard, and left the house.

"The rescued child was the talk of the county for the whole season. Every one wondered and speculated as to the boy's birth and social position, but no one could decide upon it, for there was no mark on the nightdress in which the little one had been found.

"In a few days I heard that you, my beloved and honored husband—you, of all men—had taken upon yourself the cost of the child's maintenance and education; that you had engaged to pay Miss Bayard a liberal quarterly allowance for her care of the boy, and to send him to school, as soon as he should be old enough to go.

"Then, when I heard this, my better angel urged me to confide in you—to confess the truth and throw myself upon your mercy—the mercy of the truest, noblest, tenderest heart that ever beat!

"But I dared not do it. The longer I had kept my secret from you the harder it was to tell. I feared that you would ask me why I had not told you this before our marriage. I feared that you might even part with me. And the longer I had lived with you, the more I loved you, the harder was the thought of parting from you. I could not risk the loss, even though to retain your love seemed almost a theft.

"I did not tell you, nor did I show any sympathy in your care of the friendless child. I did not go near my boy, lest he should recognize and innocently betray me.

"So weeks passed into months, and months passed into years. Children came to us, and drew our hearts even more closely together, if that were possible, than they had been before; but though I loved our little girls as fondly as ever mother did, yet I loved them no more than I loved the dear boy whom I dared not acknowledge, or even look upon.

"It was not until Roland was at school, and time and

change of fashion in clothing and hair-dressing had made such alteration in my appearance that I judged it safe to do so, I first saw my son face to face, and shook hands with him. How he stared at me! his mind evidently startled and perplexed by the phantom of a remembrance he could not fix or define.

"After that I saw him often, and was able to befriend him; but I was often troubled by the look of perplexity in the boy's eyes when they met mine. After a while, however, this shade of memory faded quite away.

"Years passed, and the old sorrow also seemed to have gone like some morning cloud of spring, leaving scarcely a trace behind.

"It was on that visit to Niagara Falls, now nearly seven years ago, when I met in the parlor of the hotel the one man I dreaded more than all men or all devils— Angus Anglesea!

"I saw my danger as soon as our eyes met. I knew that for the old repulse I had given him at Geneva he would now take his revenge. Yet I tried to look him down, but I could not. You were by my side. I was obliged to present him to you. You had heard of Angus Anglesea from my father and from my brother, and had heard nothing but praise of the man from them. You gave him a warm welcome. You pressed him to come down and visit us at Mondreer.

"Afterward, to you alone I protested against this visit with as much energy as I dared to use; for I could not explain to you why he ought not be our guest. But you thought me somewhat capricious, and declared that you could not withdraw an invitation once given.

"Then I appealed to him, to any little remnant of pride, honor or delicacy that might remain somewhere in his depraved nature, not to accept your invitation— not to enter a house which his presence would desecrate.

"He laughed in my face! He told me that he had already accepted the invitation, and that he meant to make the visit.

"You know what followed. He came down with us to Mondreer. He cast his eyes upon our dear daughter, Odalite, and on her fortune—not only on her American fortune, but on her English prospects.

"Ah! my poor Odalite! She was engaged to be married to her faithful lover, Leonidas Force, who was expected home on the Christmas of that year; and she was as true as truth to her love; she was not for a moment 'fascinated by the admiration of the brilliant stranger,' as people said. She sacrificed herself to save me; and in saving me, to save you and her sisters.

"Do you know what that snake who had entered our paradise threatened to do if he were not bought off by the hand and fortune and prospects of our daughter Odalite? He threatened to publish my secret to the whole world!

"Ah! how I mourned then that I had not told you the sad story before accepting your offer of marriage, and left you free to withdraw or to renew that offer.

"It was too late then! Every year that I had kept the story from you made it harder and more humiliating to tell. And he threatened to tell—not you—that would have been terrible enough—but to tell everybody!—to tell the story in the barrooms of the country inns, at the gentlemen's wine parties and oyster suppers—and everywhere! He would leave our house, take up his lodgings at the Calvert, and spread the venom over the whole community. That would have been fatal! Abel, this story, as he would have told it, must have driven us all in dishonor from the neighborhood. I think it would have killed you. You are strong and brave, and could have borne much—everything but dishonor! That

would have killed you! I know it would have driven me mad, and it would have blighted the lives of our children.

"I was nearly insane, even then. Some women in such a position would have committed suicide; but, apart from its sinfulness, it would have been ineffectual in my case, as, if I had died, he would still have blackmailed Odalite. Some other women in my position would have killed Anglesea. I knew that; and I knew that if ever man deserved death at a woman's hands, he did at mine; but I was not even tempted so ruthlessly to break the sacred laws of God. Nay, let me say here, that weak, blind and foolish as I have been, I have not only tried to keep, but I have kept those laws from my youth up.

"What is it, then, that I have confessed to you? Not a sin, not a fault, but a secret that I have kept from you because I had not strength enough to tell you, or light enough to know you, or wisdom enough to confide in your wisdom. It was no sin of mine that my marriage was a deception practiced upon me; but it was a great wrong to you to keep the secret of that marriage.

"You know now the secret of my life—why I consented to sacrifice Odalite to that man, from whom she was saved as by a miracle.

"Is it a mockery to ask you to pardon this lifelong secret, Abel? I know that you will pardon as freely as God pardons.

"But when you have seen these lines you may never afterward see me. Heaven knows.

"I have written the foregoing confession to put it away, lest death take me unaware, leaving me no time to tell the true story as I only can tell it.

"WASHINGTON, April 18, 18—.

"The time has come. I have learned some facts. The villain who spoiled my life, and would have spoiled my daughter's life, was not Angus Anglesea, my brother's dearest friend, college mate, and fellow-officer, but an impostor bearing his likeness and wearing his name, and now waiting trial as a pirate and a slaver, and having for his mate and fellow-prisoner one whom you have known and cared for as Roland Bayard, but who is really Roland Glennon, my son.

"No! I cannot meet you! When you have read these lines you will see me no more."

CHAPTER XL

A STARTLING ENCOUNTER

WHEN Abel Force had finished reading this manuscript he sat with it in his hand, thoughtfully gazing at the paper and almost involuntarily listening for any sound from the adjoining bedroom, where his wife lay in a very precarious condition.

At last he folded up the parcel and put it into his breast pocket, muttering to himself that he must keep it out of sight until he could get an opportunity to burn it.

Then he softly left the room and went and tapped gently at the door of his wife's chamber.

The nurse opened the door.

"How is Mrs. Force?" he inquired.

"She is sleeping under the influence of an opiate. The doctor thinks that if she sleeps well through the night she will be very much better to-morrow morning."

"Thank Heaven!"

The nurse softly closed the door, and Mr. Force returned to the little room, where he lighted the gas, for it was growing dark, made some little improvement in his toilet, for it was dinner time, and then hurried downstairs, for he had eaten nothing since breakfast.

He opened the parlor door, and was surprised to find a group of many people gathered around his own party.

Wynnette sprang out from them all to meet him.

"Oh! papa, I have not seen you since early this morning. Where have you been? We had all begun to fear that you were a 'mysterious disappearance'!"

"My dear, I have been closely engaged all day. Who are those with you?" inquired Mr. Force.

"Who? Who but your old friends and neighbors, Mrs. Dorothy Hedge, Miss Susannah Grandiere and Mr. Samuel Grandiere. Come! Come and speak to them."

"They here! Why, how did they find us out?"

"Joshua found them and brought them here, else they never would have found us out. And yet people say that dogs have no souls!"

Mr. Force hurried to meet the friends from St. Mary's, and warmly shook hands with them all.

"We are so sorry to hear that Mrs. Force is indisposed," said Mrs. Hedge, when these greetings were over.

"She has had a severe nervous shock. Such strokes must be epidemic among those who live amid 'war's alarms,' you know, Mrs. Hedge."

"Yes, of course. But all war's alarms are not disastrous. What a glorious deed young Leonidas Force has done! I congratulate you on your nephew, Mr. Force."

"Thank you, madam. Will you take my arm down to dinner? There is the gong."

The whole party arose and went down into the dining room and took their places at the table; the party filled up a large one.

After dinner they returned to the drawing room for a little while, and then the visitors from St. Mary's bade good-night, and—accompanied by Capt. Grandiere and Rosemary Hedge—went away to take possession of their rooms at a boarding house that had been found for them in E Street.

Mr. Force and Lord Enderby lighted a couple of cigars and walked out on the bright and busy avenue to smoke and stroll. Between the gas lamps and the illuminated shop windows the scene was almost as light as day, and, with its crowd of pedestrians, as noisy as a fair.

Up and down they strolled and smoked until, tired of being jolted, or, as the earl put it, "walked over," they turned up the west side of Fifteenth Street, where the sidewalk was brilliantly lighted, yet almost vacant of passengers.

Here they walked and talked in the cool of the evening, unconscious of a dark figure approaching them from the north end of the street, whose advent was to have the most important effect on the destinies of several of our friends. They were going to meet the form that was approaching them.

Both looked up carelessly and saw a tall, soldiery-looking man, who, coming up, held out his hand with an exclamation of surprise and pleasure:

"Enderby!"

The earl stared for a second and then seized the offered hand, crying with delight:

"Anglesea!"

"When did you arrive?"

This question was put, in the same words, at the same time by both.

"But three days since," answered Lord Enderby.

"Only this afternoon," replied Gen. Anglesea. "I have come to America to see your sister."

"Let me present you to my brother-in-law—Mr. Force, of Mondreer, Maryland. Mr. Force—Gen. Anglesea, late of the East Indian service—the real Simon Pure, you understand, Abel!"

The two gentlemen, thus introduced, bowed deeply.

"You say you have come over to see my sister?" inquired the earl.

"Yes! On very important business! You may judge how important when I tell you that it has brought me across the ocean at such a time as this."

"My sister is at this time indisposed. I think it will be a day or two before she is capable of attending to any business. But here is her husband."

"Of course. I am very happy to meet Mr. Force, and shall be ready, at his convenience, to enter upon this business. It concerns Lady Elfrida's first marriage."

Now, if Mr. Force had not already learned the truth concerning that first marriage, I know not what might have been the consequences of this sudden announcement. As it was, Lady Elfrida's second husband, with great presence of mind, replied:

"Precisely. I shall be ready to attend to you as soon as you please."

As for Lord Enderby—who had never heard a word about his sister's first marriage—he was considerably startled, but, with equal presence of mind, recovered himself, and said:

"If it is necessary that this matter should be entered upon this evening, we had better withdraw into apartments. We can scarcely discuss important business in the street."

"You are quite right. And I am at your service," assented the general.

"But where shall we go? Privacy is hardly to be had at any price in this overcrowded city. We have not a private sitting room at our hotel."

"Come with me, then," said Anglesea. "I have, by a fortunate chance, been able to secure a comfortable bedroom, with a little box of a sitting room adjoining."

"A box of a sitting room! What a boon! What a blessing in these times!" said the earl, as he turned with the squire and the general to walk to the last-mentioned gentleman's hotel.

Ten minutes later they were all three seated around a small table, on which stood a bottle of sherry, some wineglasses, and cigars.

"My business with Lady Elfrida," began Anglesea, "is to restore to her some documents that have been too long, indeed, in my possession, though I did not really anticipate they would ever be called for, as they now appear to be, to confirm her son's claim to the estate of his uncle—Antonio Saviola."

"'Her son?'" thought the earl to himself; but he said nothing; he only looked at Abel Force, whose face was quite impenetrable.

"I hope the young gentleman is living and is quite well."

"Yes, thank you, my stepson is quite well, and a very fine young man altogether."

The earl looked from one to the other. Here was a revelation! His sister had been twice married, and she had a living son by her first marriage! And Abel Force knew this! And he himself had never even suspected such a thing! Why had not he—her brother—her only living relative besides her husband and children—been told of this first marriage? Did his father know it, and conspire to keep the secret from him, too? Did Anglesea also know it from the first, and confederate with all the other conspirators to keep the secret from him—the son, the brother, the bosom friend? It was very hard on him, the injured earl reflected.

In the meantime the general had taken out from a

rolled morocco case a few parchments, which he spread upon the little table—pushing all the glasses together to make room. Then, missing some papers from among the others, he arose and went into the adjoining chamber to look for it.

Lord Enderby seized the opportunity afforded by his temporary absence to stoop and whisper to the squire:

"This sudden news of my sister's first marriage has fallen like a thunderbolt upon me!"

"Has it?" inquired the squire, with forced calmness.

"I should think so! I had never dreamed of such a thing! Why was it kept a secret from me? Did my father know it?"

"Certainly."

"My father knew it! Anglesea knew it! You knew it! Why was it kept secret from me?"

"My dear Enderby—because it seemed to your father necessary that it should be kept so," soothingly replied the squire.

"Was the marriage a discreditable one, then?"

"No, it was not."

"Then why, in the name of Heaven, could it not have been announced?"

"My dear Enderby—secrecy is not always wrong and foolish; it is sometimes wise and right. It was so in this instance. And I may further promise to satisfy you of this in a few hours."

"When you married my sister, did you know that she had been married before, and that she had a living son by that first marriage?"

"Most certainly I did!" said Mr. Force, with emphasis.

"And yet I remember—I swear that I remember—she signed her name to her marriage register with you, Elfrida Glennon."

"Hush! here comes Anglesea," said the squire, as the general entered the room.

CHAPTER XLI

THE OTHER SIDE

"You are, of course, aware," said the latter, sitting down at the table and beginning to arrange his papers before him—"you are, of course, aware of my own intimate connection with the very youthful marriage of my friends, Lady Elfrida Glennon and Prince Luigi Saviola?"

Mr. Force, thoroughly informed of that circumstance, could bow acquiescence. This assent was supposed to answer also for Lord Enderby—who, however, knew nothing about it—and the general continued:

"You know that at that time I was a very young man, scarcely having attained my majority. I had a warm friendship for, and a youthful sympathy with, the young lovers; yet I would have dissuaded Saviola from the hasty marriage if I could have done so. But who can turn an Italian lover from his love chase? Seeing that I could do nothing to prevent the marriage that was sure to come off, sooner or later—for her father was in the East, and her brother was at Eton, and a minor, and she herself only in the care of two teachers for whom she had neither love nor esteem—I determined to do a brother's or a father's part by her, at least so far as going with the mad pair and seeing that the marriage ceremony was duly and lawfully performed in Scotland. But you have heard all this before, and I am wasting time, perhaps, in trying to excuse myself."

"Your course in that affair needs no excuse, but

rather the gratitude of all who are interested in Lady Elfrida," said Mr. Force.

"I thank you, sir. I did indeed act in the interest of the young lady. I went to Scotland with the young pair and saw them properly married, in the parlor of the manse, by the minister, at Kilton, Dumfries, North Briton; and in addition to the certificate given to the bride, I took a duplicate, duly signed and witnessed, because I thought it just possible the young lady might mislay or lose her lines."

"You are sure that the place at which you stopped for the marriage was Kilton, in Scotland, and not Kelton, a few miles south in England?" inquired Mr. Force.

Anglesea lifted his eyes from the paper in his hand and looked at the questioner with surprise.

"They are so near together on the same line, and the sound of the names are so similar, that the mistake might easily have been made—on a night journey," Mr. Force explained.

"It might, but it was not. Here is the certificate. Will you examine it?" said the general, laying the document before the squire.

Sure enough, there was the printed heading:

Parish of Kilton, Dumfries, N. B.

And then followed the date and the record of the marriage between Luigi Saviola, of Naples, Italy, and Elfrida Glennon, of Northumberland, England, signed by the minister and attested by two witnesses.

Abel Force heaved so deep a sigh of relief that Lord Enderby bent toward him and inquired:

"What is the matter? Why were you so anxious about this point?"

"I will tell you later. I will explain everything later. For the present let us listen to the facts."

"I wish to put one question to you, Anglesea, and in

the name of our lifelong friendship: Why did you never inform me of my sister's marriage?"

"Because, my dear fellow, I was in honor bound to keep the secret until the parties concerned announced their marriage. As I heard nothing about it from you or your father, I was restrained from mentioning the subject."

"I see! I see!" assented the earl.

"I should not have brought up the matter now had not the death of Saviola and the marriage of his widow absolved me from my implied pledge of secrecy; and very important considerations constrained me to cross the ocean to seek out Lady Elfrida and to speak of her first marriage, of which I was the principal witness."

"I thank you, both on the part of Lady Elfrida and myself, for the great interest you have felt and the great trouble you have taken in her cause," said Abel Force so earnestly that Lord Enderby muttered to himself:

"I wonder what in the deuce has come over the squire? But I shall know presently, perhaps."

"I must explain these considerations," continued the general. "I was at Naples last year, where I renewed my acquaintance with the aged prince, Antonio Saviola, whom I had known years before. We met at the house of a mutual friend. He invited me to dine *tête-à-tête* with him on the next day, and to come early, as he wished to converse with me on a subject near. I accepted the invitation and went."

"Pardon," said the earl; "what relation was Prince Antonio to Luigi Saviola?"

"He was the granduncle of Luigi, who was his next of kin. When I reached the Palazzo Saviola I was at once ushered into the presence of the prince, who received me in his library with much cordiality. He entered at once upon the subject in his mind by saying:

" 'You were the attendant of my grandnephew, Luigi,

on the occasion of his marriage with the only daughter of an English earl?'

"'Yes, sir,' I answered, a little surprised that he should know the fact.

"'So I was informed by a letter from my nephew soon after the occurrence. You were also his second in the fatal duel in Paris, about a year later, in which my nephew lost his life?'

"'No, prince. I was not in Paris at the time of that unhappy meeting,' I answered.

"'Then I have been misinformed upon that point. But there is no question of your having been a witness to his marriage?'

"'No question at all, prince. I was present in the interests of the lady, taking the place of her father or brother, one of whom should have been there to give her away.'

"'Precisely. That is how I understood from Luigi your presence at this Montague and Capulet marriage. I have lost sight of the widow entirely. I last heard of her at Geneva. In a letter written to me by my unhappy nephew on the night before his duel he told me that his wife was at the Beau Rivage, Geneva, expecting the birth of a child; that if he should survive the meeting of the next day he would hurry to her side. If he should fall, he recommended her to my sympathy and compassion. This letter found me prostrate with typhoid fever, and did not meet my eyes for weeks after it was written. My nephew was dead and buried. His widow had left Geneva, accompanied by her father and her infant. All my efforts to find them proved fruitless, and at last I gave up inquiry. Only lately have I become again interested in the subject. The reason is this: I am very aged, near ninety. My sons and grandsons have all gone before me to the better land. The last, Vittorio, departed some months since. I have no heirs,

unless it happens that the posthumous child of Luigi proves to be a son and is now living. It is to ascertain this point that I have called you here to-day.'

"I could tell him nothing about the child, of whom I had never heard. But I offered to go to Geneva in person, and search the church register of the year and month in which the child of Luigi and Elfrida was born, and ascertain whether that child were son or daughter. I did so, and succeeded in procuring an attested copy of the registry of birth and baptism of Rolando, son of Luigi Antonio Saviola and Elfrida, his wife. This I took to Naples and laid before the old prince, together with the certificate of the marriage of Luigi and Elfrida. The old man was very near his end, but he lived long enough to acknowledge the boy as his legal heir, and to make a will, leaving him all his devisable property. 'For I feel sure the youth is living, *Amigo,*' he said. 'Fortune would not be so cruel as to cut off the entire family of Saviola.'

"Those were his last words.

"After the funeral, I prepared to return to England, to search for Lady Elfrida and her son. Judge of my surprise when I learned, by a mere accident, that she had been with her family at Naples only a few weeks before. I went over to England, only to hear that she had sailed, with all her party, for America. I took ship and followed. Looked for you in New York in vain. Remembered that you had a country seat at Mondreer, Maryland. Came down to Washington to-day en route for Mondreer. Ran up against you, Enderby, in the street to-night."

"A lucky meeting," said the earl.

"Yes. These documents before me are attested copies —the first of the certificates of the marriage between Luigi Saviola and Elfrida Glennon; the second of the registry of baptism of Rolando, their son; the third

of the last will and testament of Antonio Saviola. These will establish the claim of the young man, who, you say, is alive and well, to the estate of his late uncle. When may I bring them to Lady Elfrida?"

"To-morrow, if you please," replied Mr. Force.

Then the earl and the squire arose, and, with renewed thanks, bade the general good-night.

CHAPTER XLII

THE EARL'S DISCOVERY

THE church bells were chiming twelve, midnight, as the earl and the squire walked along the now almost deserted avenue toward their hotel.

"I had no idea it was so late," said the earl.

"Nor I," assented the squire.

"Force!"

"Well?"

"Will you tell me now, as we walk along, why my sister's first marriage was kept a secret from me during all these years? Why even my chum in college, my fellow soldier in camp, never once mentioned the matter to me?"

"He has explained that in his case it was because no one spoke of it to him, and it was not his cue to be the first to allude to it."

"But why? Why was all this mystery about a marriage that was honorable enough in itself?"

"Because there was a fatal misapprehension. I call it fatal, on account of the years of untold misery it entailed upon more than one."

"Explain."

"You remember, and can now at last appreciate, the

dreary loneliness and isolation of your sister's childhood and early youth at Weirdwaste?"

"Oh, yes! yes!"

"And the bewildering change that Brighton and a princely lover must have been to the hitherto solitary recluse of Weirdwaste?"

"Yes, yes!"

"The fear of having to return to that desolation must have been as strong a motive as love itself in inducing her to fly to Scotland with her lover."

"Most probably."

"She had neither father, nor brother, nor any relative near her; no one but governesses and servants."

"Ah! my poor father never meant to be unkind, but it was cruel to leave her in that isolation."

"She found it so; and she listened to the pleadings of her lover, whom her imagination had elevated into a hero, martyr, patriot and humanitarian, when, in fact, he was only a political refugee, on account of some hot-headed revolutionary utterances he had given."

"Yes, I heard of Saviola's exile while at Brighton; but I never met the man."

"I think your friend Anglesea had not met him at the time you were in Brighton. He first met Saviola at Lord Middlemoor's, on Brunswick Terrace."

"You seem to be well informed on all points of this affair, Force."

"Pretty well," said the squire; "but to proceed. Your sister went to Scotland to marry Saviola, escorted by your friend Anglesea, who, having done all he could to dissuade the Italian from running away with the young lady, and having failed, was resolved that the marriage that he could not prevent should at least be properly and legally solemnized."

"Yes, he told us that."

"And he told you also that he was bound to secrecy."

"He did."

"Well, now to the point. When the newly married pair parted from Anglesea, on the day of their marriage, they never saw him again."

"No?"

"No. You heard Anglesea relate how the old Prince Antonio Saviola supposed him—Anglesea—to have acted as second to Luigi Saviola on the occasion of his fatal duel with the Duc de Montmeri, and how he—Anglesea—had denied all knowledge of the tragedy?"

"Yes, I did hear, and I remembered that Anglesea was at that very time at college with me."

"Well, then, Enderby, listen: If the bona-fide Anglesea did not officiate as Luigi Saviola's second in that duel, his double, Byrne Stukely, did."

"What!"

"Yes, Anglesea's *bête noir,* evil genius, material counterpart, Byrne Stukely, did. He personated Anglesea in Paris, on the dueling ground, and at the death of Saviola, and in the apartments of Saviola's widow!"

"Ah! what new infamy is this of which you tell me? I shall have to prosecute that villain if he should escape the law here!" exclaimed the earl.

"He will not escape the law here; but to proceed——"

"Yes—yes!"

"Stukely received the last dying messages from the lips of Saviola, and some little time afterward took them to his widow in Geneva. There, passing himself off for Anglesea—undetected, unsuspected by her, he delivered his credentials, and won her confidence. But, when he saw the beautiful young widow, he dared to think of her in a manner that should have brought down upon him severe chastisement."

"How? What?" demanded the earl, in an excited voice.

"Calm yourself, Enderby. Be patient, my friend. Here is our hotel. Shall we go in?"

"No! no! I cannot go indoors now! Let us walk here where the night air cools my head—unless you are tired, Force?"

"No, I am not tired. We will walk on a little way."

"Well, go on!"

"With an artful delicacy, with sham sympathy, he approached the subject, and told Saviola's widow that she was, in fact, no widow at all; that her marriage with the late prince was null and void from the first, because it had been celebrated at Kelton, in Cumberland, England, instead of at Kilton, in ——shire, Scotland. He manufactured plenty of false evidence to prove his falsehood to be truth, and then—and then——"

"What? what?"

"He insulted the lady with the offer of his heart and——"

"Hand?"

"Protection!" murmured the squire.

The earl sprang into the air as if he had been shot, but came down upon his feet. He said nothing. There are some things that will not bear a single word of comment. This was one.

"She ordered the venomous reptile from her presence, and he crawled away, but left his poisoned sting behind. The consummate art of his false evidence had convinced her, as it afterward convinced her father, and, later on, myself also, that her marriage ceremony with Saviola was an empty form—null and void. Her father never knew otherwise. She does not know otherwise to this day. And I knew no better until to-night."

"You believed my sister, your wife, to have been the victim of a false first marriage until to-night?"

"Yes, until the moment when Gen. Anglesea produced the certificate, and told the true story."

"And yet you married her!"

"Yes, thank Heaven, I was permitted to marry her, and she has been the light of my life," said the squire, fervently.

"With this cloud overshadowing her."

"Enderby, every one of us has something to bear. This secret and its evil consequences have been our cross. We have had no other. We have loved each other truly, and we have been happy in our married life, notwithstanding our cross."

"Force, you are a noble fellow! But now about her son. Where is he?"

"Well," said the squire, smiling and hesitating, "he is a very fine young man, a prisoner of war at present, but he shall be free to-morrow."

"Not—Roland Bayard!"

"Yes, Roland Bayard. As fine a young man as breathes."

"Then, after his mother, he is my heir."

"Yes, Anglesea has proved his legal right to be called so."

"Force, does the boy know of his parentage?"

"No. His birth was a mystery to him, as it was to every one except me and his mother. He believes himself to be the son of Byrne Stukely, and that is the reason why his tongue has been tied, so that he will not give the evidence that will clear himself and go near to hang Stukely."

"I see! I see!"

"But he shall give it to-morrow, and be set at liberty. I shall see to that. Here we are again at the door of our hotel. Shall we go in? Or have you anything else to ask me?" questioned the squire.

"No; nothing else to-night. Let us go in."

The two gentlemen entered the house, got their chamber keys from the sleepy watchman, and went upstairs.

The public parlors were dark and deserted. The gas burned low in the halls.

The earl and the squire bade each other good-night and separated, and went off to their several apartments.

Mr. Force climbed another flight of stairs to seek the little room he had occupied since his wife's illness.

He paused at the door of her sick chamber and knocked lightly.

The night nurse answered the summons.

"How is Mrs. Force this evening?" he inquired.

"She is better, sir, and she is sleeping nicely," replied the woman.

"Thank Heaven! Good-night," said the squire, as he turned away and entered his own little room.

He retired to bed, too happy to sleep until near morning, when at length he sank to rest.

CHAPTER XLIII

HUSBAND AND WIFE

It was late in the morning when Abel Force was awakened by a gentle tapping at his chamber door.

"Who is there?" he inquired, as he hastily arose, thrust his feet into slippers, drew on his dressing gown, and opened the door.

"It is I, papa," said Wynnette, in a cheerful voice, and with a bright smile, that at once dispelled the squire's fears for his wife, which had been aroused by the summons.

"How is your mother?" he inquired.

"She is better, papa. She is awake now. Dr. Bolton says that we may see her, but only one at a time. I thought you would like to be the first, so I came to call

you. I did not know that you were still asleep. It is late, you see."

"Yes, it is late; but I was up nearly all night. Thank Heaven that your mother is better. Come in, Wynnette."

"Hadn't I better leave you to dress, papa?"

"Presently. But I wish to send a line by you to your mother before I go to her. I will dress while you take it."

Wynnette entered the room, closed the door, and sat down on the side of the little bed to wait for the "line."

Mr. Force went to the small stand, and wrote:

"Dearest dear, I have read your paper, and I love you as ever—more than ever, if that were possible; for love is deepened and sanctified by sympathy with all that you have suffered. Send me word by our Wynnette if you feel well enough to see me. I am longing to be with you."

He folded the paper and gave it to his daughter, saying:

"Go in to see your mother, and when you have kissed and embraced her give her this note, and wait until she reads it. Then bring me any message that she may send."

Wynnette took the missive, wondering a little why her father should send it, and left the room to deliver it.

But Mr. Force had acted with prudent foresight. He feared that, in his wife's nervous and enfeebled condition, the sudden sight of him in her room while she was yet in doubt about his feelings toward her, might have a disastrous effect upon her health. Therefore he had sent the short, loving message as a preparation for his visit.

He dressed himself in a great hurry, and waited for the return of Wynnette.

She came while he was drawing on his coat.

"Mamma wants you to come at once and see her alone. She has sent out the nurse."

"How did you find her, Wynnette?"

"Oh, she is better. All right, I should think, except that she is very weak and as white as chalk. She cried when she read your note, papa. Why did she cry, papa? What was in your note?"

"She cried from nervousness, my dear. There was nothing in my note to distress her. I expressed the sympathy I felt, and asked her if she was able to see me," replied the squire, truthfully, as far as the words went, yet exasively.

"Oh!" said Wynnette, and she was perfectly satisfied.

"I am going to see her now," said the squire, as he passed out of his own little room and went to his wife's chamber.

He opened the door and passed in. The window shutters were open, but the white shades were down and the lace curtains drawn, so that the chamber was filled with a soft, dim, white light, that showed the low French bed and the fair form upon it.

As Mr. Force approached his wife, she put up her hands and covered her face.

"Elfrida," he said, in low and tender tones.

"Oh, how can I look you in the face?" she murmured.

"How can I kiss you, dear, unless you take away your hands?" he said, gently removing them and pressing his lips to hers.

"Oh, Abel! if I could leave my bed—I should be at your feet! It is on my knees that I should receive your forgiveness," she moaned.

"My dearest," he whispered, kissing her again—"my

dearest, I do not offer you forgiveness, for you have done me no wrong."

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! I had a shameful secret, and I kept it from you, and married you! My love—— No, no! my selfish feeling was not worthy of the name of love, yet what else can I call it? Whatever it was, it blinded me to honor and duty and drew me on to marry you, with that shameful secret in my heart," she moaned.

"Dear wife, you are very morbid. Your secret was not a shameful one, and it was never kept from me," he answered, caressingly.

"What, Abel! What are you telling me?" she inquired, starting up in bed.

"Lie down again. Calm yourself and keep very quiet, Elfrida. I have much to tell you, and I will tell you all. Confession for confession, my dear."

"The idea that you should have anything to confess! It is impossible, Abel!" she said, as she sank back on her pillow and lay quietly as he had told her to do.

"Yes, Elfrida! Confession for confession! for I knew your secret when we married, but I never let you suspect that I knew it."

"How?" she breathed, in wonder.

"Your father told me, when I asked him for your hand. The late earl had insight enough into character to see that he could trust me; that I could never blame you for the deception he believed had been practiced upon you; that I should consider you as truly an honorable widow as if the marriage you believed to have been a fraud, had been as legal a bond as it is now proved to have been!"

"What—what are you saying, Abel? I—I—cannot comprehend."

"I am telling you that Saviola married you in good faith, and that your marriage was as lawful as heaven and earth could make it! But lie still, keep quiet, and

let me tell my story in my own way. You will then be able to comprehend it better."

"I will try," she said, settling herself once more.

"You will remember that when I asked your father for your hand he said that he must have a talk with you before he could give an answer."

"Yes, he told me so, when he came to talk with me of your proposal."

"You remember that you refused me, all on account of that secret, which you would not reveal. I, not knowing why you refused me, but certainly knowing that you returned my love, declined to take no for an answer, and so I continued to be a member of your father's traveling party."

"Yes."

"After some weeks I again renewed my proposal for your hand to the earl, your father, begging his intercession with you on my behalf. It was then that he took me into his confidence and told me of the false marriage into which—he believed—you had been led while yet a young, motherless girl in the schoolroom, and of the child that had been born of that marriage, and finally of the death of the man who had perpetrated the supposed wrong."

"It must have been a great shock to you."

"A shock that was without the least blame to you, my darling wife; so that when I recovered from it I told your father that you were in my eyes a blameless widow, and that I should be the proudest and happiest man alive if I could be blessed with your love and honored with your hand."

"Oh, Abel! Generous soul!"

"He then told me where the difficulty lay—that you imagined yourself so—so—well, so injured by the wrong which had been done you—or which you believed had been done you—that you could never bring yourself

either to reveal it to me, or to marry me without having revealed it."

"No, I could not—I could have died, or lived in misery sooner."

"So your father told me. But I was a young man, in love, my dearest, and therefore ready with expedients. I said to the earl:

" 'I see a way out of all this.'

"He replied:

" 'Tell me, for I see none.'

"I answered:

" 'You have told me these antecedents, and your most fastidious sense of honor is satisfied. I know the secret, and still pray for the honor of your daughter's hand, as I believe I have already the blessing of her love. Pray go, therefore, to your daughter, ask her if she considers you a man of honor and integrity worthy of her trust. Of course, she will earnestly, and with wonder and indignation at such a question, assure you that she does. You will then please tell her of my renewed proposals and assure her, in turn, that on your honor as a peer, and your faith as a Christian, she may accept my hand without revealing her secret, and without detriment to her conscience.'

"The earl remained plunged in thought for a few minutes, and then replied:

" 'I believe you have found a way out of the labyrinth. I will do as you request upon one condition.'

"I asked him what it was. He answered:

" 'That you never tell my daughter that you knew her secret. She is so morbid on that point, I believe she would die if she thought you knew it.'

"I promised. And, Elfrida, darling, you know the rest. We married, each having a secret from the other —yours the secret of your first marriage, mine the secret

of the forbidden knowledge of that marriage. Did I not say that I should offer confession for confession?"

CHAPTER XLIV

LOVE STRONGER THAN FATE

"Oh, Abel! what did you think of me all that time?"

"I thought that you were the loveliest, yet the most morbid, woman, upon one point, on the face of the earth. Often when I looked at you and saw you preoccupied and very sorrowful, I wished that you would be brave enough to tell me your trouble and so relieve your heart and find rest in my sympathy. But you never took courage to speak of it, and I was bound by my promise to the late earl never to reveal my knowledge unless you should first trust me with your secret. You have done so at last, and enabled me to make my confession also."

"And oh! Abel, you educated my son!"

"Our son. I adopted him when I married his mother."

"Oh, Abel! Noble heart!"

"Hush, dear, I am but an honest and well-meaning man. At least I hope I am that much. As soon as we heard of the earl's death I sent for the child, whom he had cared for while he lived. The boy was brought over in a Baltimore clipper and I went to the city to meet him. I found the boy thriving, and I sent him down to Port Tobacco by sea while I came home by land. I intended that he should be reared in Port Tobacco, where I could go to see him often and watch over his training. It was a stormy season, and I, traveling by the shorter land route, reached home fully a week before

the tempest-tossed and battered *Carrier Pigeon* was driven upon our shores and wrecked with the loss of all on board, except the child alone, who was strangely saved. I should have taken him at once to our own home but for consideration of you. I gave him in charge of Miss Bayard. In a day or two I knew that you had seen and recognized the boy. Then I noticed that any mention of the wrecked child distressed you. So I did all that I could for the little lad without forcing him upon your notice."

"My noble Abel! I have never deserved such a heart!"

"No more of that, love. I think now that I have made 'a clean breast of it.' I think I have told you all."

"Except this: You said that my first marriage was not a fraud, but a legal act. Oh! is that true? And if true, how came you to know it?" inquired the lady.

"Oh, yes, I must explain that. And then, Elfrida, you must neither talk nor listen longer. You are exhausted."

"But tell me, first, how do you know my first marriage was legal?"

"Do you remember the discovery we made the day before you were taken ill?—the discovery that the villain who attempted to blackmail you and marry our heiress, under the name of Angus Anglesea, was not that gallant officer at all, but an impostor, taking advantage of the closest possible resemblance to Anglesea to carry out his own nefarious purposes?"

"Yes; a relative of Anglesea—Byrne Stukely."

"The same. Well, twenty years ago Anglesea and Stukely—I hate to connect their names—were exact counterparts, as you have heard. Well, this same Stukely was in Paris at the time that Saviola was there, and was taking the name and character of his benefactor. Saviola, deceived by the name and resemblance, mistook

him for Anglesea, and asked him to act as his second. Stukely consented, and when Saviola fell, mortally wounded, the dying man intrusted the impostor with important papers and confidential messages, to be delivered to you at Geneva. Now do you understand?"

"Yes, I see. But he took his time in coming to Geneva; did not make his appearance there, indeed, until weeks after Saviola's death, when he came, I suppose, in the course of his own business."

"Well, my dear Elfrida, it must have been the sight of your beautiful face that tempted him to his subtle villainies; to use the papers and the information he really possessed in the manufacturing of false evidence, to convince you that your true and lawful marriage had been a fraud, in order to get you in his power."

"Yes, yes. But when and how did you discover that the marriage was really lawful, and that the evidence produced by Stukely was fabricated?"

"By the appearance, yesterday, of the bona-fide Angus Anglesea, who went with you and Saviola to Scotland, saw you married, and, for your better security, took an attested copy of your marriage certificate, which I have now in my possession."

"My brother's friend here! My brother's friend all that we first believed him to be! The vow he madè to see me scathless through my mad marriage kept to the letter! The shadow lifted from my life! Oh! I am so glad—so glad, and so grateful! Thank Heaven!—oh, thank Heaven!"

"Do not excite yourself, Elfrida. You promised to be quiet."

"Well, I will. I will be quiet. But I am so happy—happier than I have been for twenty-five years! What brought Gen. Anglesea here?"

"He came in search of you. He brought with him some papers that belong to you," said the squire; and

then, while the lady listened with breathless interest, he told her of his accidental meeting with her brother's old friend on the avenue the night before, and of the long interview they had had in the apartments of the general, in which the latter had told of his visit to Naples, his chance encounter with the Prince Saviola, and all that had transpired on the occasion, which was followed a few weeks later by the death of the prince, who had left all his devisable estate to his grandnephew, Rolando, only son of Luigi Saviola, and his wife, Elfrida Glennon."

"And our dear friend took all the trouble to go to Geneva and hunt up the baptismal register of my son, and then to come across the ocean to find me out?"

"And to bring you the copies of your marriage certificate, the register of your son's birth and baptism, and of your greatuncle's will."

"But my son, Abel!—my son!" she cried.

"Our son's release is the question of a few hours only. He has been a voluntary prisoner because he has been grossly deceived by Stukely into the belief that he is Stukely's son——"

The lady gave a cry of horror.

"And he refused to testify against his supposed father. This morning, Grandiere, Anglesea and myself will go to see him together and tell him the truth. He will no longer refuse to testify. We will then go to the commissioner of prisoners and ask for him an early hearing. If there should be any delay, we will go to the President. I think I can promise that he will be released before sunset."

"Heaven grant it!" breathed the lady.

"And now, Elfrida, I must summon your nurse and leave you to repose. You had better not try to see any one else to-day, not even the children. Anglesea will wait until to-morrow for an interview."

"One more word before you leave me, Abel."

"What is it?"

"How came I back here in this bed? Where did you find me? I know I was crazed with trouble when I left that statement on the table and started on my journey. I have no distinct memory of that journey until I lost myself in a wild, dark, desert place, infested with wild beasts and birds of prey, and then oblivion, until I awoke to find myself in this bed. How did I get back? Who brought me home?"

"You have never been away, dear Elfrida. Your 'howling wilderness' was but a delirious dream. In your distraction you prepared to leave me, no doubt, but you never left the room. You were found by little Elva, dressed as for a journey, but lying in a swoon upon the carpet. You were put to bed and skilfully treated, and you have got better."

"Is—it—possible?" murmured the lady, passing her hand dreamily over her forehead.

"It is true. And now, dearest, though I would much rather pass the whole day beside your bed, I must call your nurse and let you rest. You must not be disturbed again to-day," said Abel Force, as he stooped and kissed her.

She put out her arms and drew his head down again and returned his kiss, murmuring:

"Bless you, Abel! Bless you! Bless you!"

Then she released him, and he went softly to the door and opened it.

Mrs. Winder, the sick nurse, was sitting on a chair a few feet off. She arose and met the squire, saying, reproachfully:

"You have stayed too long, sir! The doctor expressly said that no one must talk to my patient for more than five minutes, and you have stayed half an hour, at least.

It is very wrong, sir, indeed, very wrong—and I should not like to be responsible for the consequences!"

"You must pardon me on this occasion, nurse," said the squire, good-humoredly. "I hope I have done your patient no harm, and I promise that no one else shall disturb her to-day."

"No, sir, that they shan't! I will see to that!" answered the woman, with the despotism of her class.

Mr. Force was too happy to be resentful.

He went downstairs to the ladies' parlor, where he found a large party waiting for him—Odalite, Elva, Wynnette, Mrs. Hedge, Miss Grandiere, Miss Bayard, Rosemary, Capt. Gideon and young Sam.

He bowed as he entered the room, where he was promptly met by Wynnette, who at once flew at him and pecked him with the words:

"Papa, you are a perfect outlaw. You were not given permission to stay more than five minutes in mamma's room, and you have stayed—about five hours, it seems to me."

"Oh! tut, tut, tut! What reckless exaggeration! Not half an hour, my dear," said the squire.

"And we are all just famishing. Here are our friends from the country, too. They have got furnished apartments on E Street, but they have to come here for their meals, and they are just fainting with hunger."

The squire thought they need not have waited for him, but might have gone down to breakfast under the escort of the old skipper, but he was too kind-hearted to say so.

"She is only teasing you, Mr. Force. She has no respect for the fourth commandment. We have but just arrived, and though we have excellent appetites for our breakfast, we are not suffering from hunger," said Mrs. Hedge.

"I know, Wynnette," said the chick-pecked papa.

"But now we will go downstairs at once. Where is Enderby, then?"

"He went out to breakfast with a friend who has just arrived from England, but I didn't catch his name," replied the skipper.

"Oh, I know. Miss Sibby, will you take my arm?"

"Now, what do I want with your arm, Abel Force? Them as has arms and legs of their own, sez I, don't need to be toted along on other people's, sez I," replied the old lady, trotting on before the party.

CHAPTER XLV

WINDING UP

When the party returned to the drawing room they found the earl and the general waiting for them.

The squire greeted his friends, and then introduced the general.

The visitors from the country, who had known the counterfeit to their cost, were now very much pleased to make the acquaintance of the genuine officer.

Presently, taking Anglesea aside, Mr. Force said to him:

"I have had a long interview this morning with my invalid wife. There has been a full explanation between us; but the excitement of such a conversation has exhausted her, and nurse and doctor forbid any more talk to-day, and enjoin absolute repose. To-morrow she will see you. In the meantime, will you be so good, if you have no objection, to go with Capt. Grandiere and myself to one of our military prisons? You need not fear anything unwholesome. The place is a miracle of cleanliness."

"A veteran of the East Indian army need not fear the sight of a military prison," laughed the earl. "But what may be the object of our visit?"

Mr. Force then explained the real position of Roland Bayard and of Byrne Stukely, and the deception that had been practiced by the slaver captain on his young prisoner to persuade the latter that he was the son of the former, and to prevent him from giving the evidence that would clear himself and hang his supposed father.

"It is to abuse the young fellow of this false impression, and to prove to him his real parentage, that I wish you to accompany us to the prison, general," concluded Mr. Force.

"Of course, I will do all that with much pleasure. So my estimable relative, Stukely, has wound up his career by turning pirate and slaver in these war times! Well, something of the sort might have been expected of him. And his extradition has been demanded by the British Government, I hear."

These last words fell on the ear of Capt. Grandiere, who immediately answered:

"Yes, and when they get him they'll hang him, for they don't mince matters with such scoundrels as we do! But, Force," he added, turning to the squire, "an article in this morning's paper, while it confirms the report about Stukely, denies that the extradition of Craven Cloud, or any other than the slaver captain, has been demanded. And that is plausible, too, for what time had they to hear of Craven Cloud, who has only passed a few weeks on board of the slaver by which he was taken prisoner?"

"And who is Craven Cloud?" demanded the general.

"Craven Cloud is the name our poor Roland took in his dire misery to save his own name from unmerited dishonor and to save his friends from the knowledge of

his possible fate. I am glad that he is not included in this demand of your government."

"So am I, for his extradition would have involved painful delays in getting his rights."

Mr. Force then rang the bell and ordered a carriage —if one could be procured—to be at the door in twenty minutes.

Then he went up to Rosemary Hedge, took her hand, and said:

"Dear little, faithful heart, we are all going to get Roland out of prison. It may take us all day, for there may be lots of red tape to disentangle; but we expect to bring him back with us."

Rosemary smiled gratefully.

"Did I hear you say you expected to bring my Roland back with you?" inquired Miss Sibby.

"Yes, madam," replied the squire.

"Well, now, you do it, Abel Force! You better had, squire! If you don't I'll walk myself right up to the President! I won't go to any of your secretaries, nor commissioners, nor any other understrappers! I'll walk myself right up to the President of these United States, and I'll demand of him why a brave and honorable young man who is the adopted nephew of a descendant of the great duke of England is kept in prison! If you go to any one, sez I, go to headquarters, sez I!"

"What does she mean by the 'duke of England'?" inquired the general, in a low voice.

"Oh, she means a duke of England—that is, Thomas, fourth Duke of Norfolk, one of whose younger sons came over to Maryland with Leonard Calvert in 1633, and from whom Miss Bayard's mother was really descended —a fact which she never forgets or allows any one else to forget. A long decline, you will say, but, my dear general, there are people descended from your English aristocracy who are working on our roads, or pining in

our prisons, as there are also people descended from your English peasantry who are filling the highest places in our social and national life. The waves of rank rise and fall like those of the ocean!"

"'Here we go up—up—up!
And here we go down—down—downy!'"

murmured Wynnette, who, standing nearest the speakers, had overheard with her sharp ears the low-toned words of this conversation.

The carriage was now announced, and the three gentlemen left the room to go upon their visit to Roland, in the Old Capitol prison, putting the ladies under the care of Sam Grandiere.

Young Sam, too gallant to leave them, yet with his "ruling passion strong," under all circumstances, proposed to take them to the Agricultural College, and also to the agricultural grounds and conservatories.

All the ladies consented to go, except Odalite, who decided to stay home for the chance of being admitted to see her invalid mother, and of receiving a visit from her lover, should his official duties give him time to call.

But Le found no opportunity to visit his sweetheart that day, and Odalite remained alone, unsummoned even by her mother, who, jealously guarded by her nurse, was kept in a state of complete quietude.

She did not go down to lunch because she disliked to enter alone the public dining room, crowded as it was at all times with officers, soldiers and civilians.

She remained in the ladies' parlor, ate a few crackers, read a few newspapers, went occasionally to her mother's door to inquire after the patient, and hearing that she was resting quietly, returned to her parlor and her reading.

So passed the day.

It was late in the afternoon when Sam Grandiere and his party returned from their sightseeing excursion.

The ladies were hungry and fatigued, and anxious to get something to eat, and then to go to their rooms and lie down.

But Sam was full of the wonders of agriculture, horticulture and floriculture to which he had been introduced that day.

"If I was to be condemned for my sins to live in the city—which Heaven in mercy forbid—and was allowed to choose the place of my punishment, it would be the Agricultural College. I could stand that better than any other place," he said.

And this was high praise, coming from such a quarter.

When they had all lunched the Grandieres and Hedges returned to their lodgings in E Street to rest before dinner. They always went and came under protest, declaring that to sleep in one house and eat in another seemed to them so disorderly as to border on indecency.

But Wynnette always quoted Sancho Panza, reminding them that "Travelers must be content," especially in war time.

It was dark when at length the three gentlemen returned to the hotel, with Lieut. Force and Roland Bayard in their company.

As they entered the parlor Odalite sprang up with a little cry of joy, given no less to the released prisoner than to her betrothed lover.

"Is it all over? Is Roland quite free now?" she inquired, after she had shaken hands with both the young men.

"Well, no, not quite over, for Roland is detained here in Washington as a witness. Perhaps he will have to go

to England as a witness. Find seats, gentlemen. I will tell you all about it, Odalite," said Mr. Force.

When they were all seated, the squire continued:

"We went from here to the Old Capitol prison, to see this knight, who was going to sacrifice himself upon a hallucination. Never mind that, you will understand by and by. Our friend here was enabled to give Roland the true history of his birth and parentage, being fully acquainted with all the facts and furnished with documents to prove them."

"And who, then, is he—Roland?" inquired Odalite, with affectionate interest.

"Stay, my dear! Not now! I cannot inform you just yet. You shall know his position presently. Now I wish to tell you how we released Roland. First we told his own story and convinced him that he owed no duty to the impostor who had deceived him. Then we went to the commissioner of prisoners, without much success. Then to the secretary of war, without much more. Finally to the President, who, after hearing what we had to say, signed an order for Roland's release on parole."

"But why not release in full?" inquired the young lady.

"Because, my dear, there must be an investigation. And that takes time. However, he is practically free."

CHAPTER XLVI

REVELATIONS

The ladies' parlor of the Blank Hotel, in the city of Washington, consisted of several rooms thrown into one by arches, draped with curtains.

It was the habit of the guests to collect in family or social groups in the several compartments of this saloon, where each circle could enjoy some privacy apart from the stranger inmates.

On this warm evening in May all the Forces, except the mother, all the Grandieres who were in Washington, the Hedges, Miss Bayard, Roland, Gen. Anglesea and the Earl of Enderby, were assembled in the rear alcove, at a safe distance from any other guests who might be in the parlor.

For still greater privacy the curtains of the arch had been lowered, and for coolness the sashes of the bay window at the back had been raised.

They thus enjoyed something like the seclusion of a domestic drawing room.

There was a gay group at the other extremity of the saloon, and the sound but not the sense of their talk and laughter sometimes reached our party in the rear alcove.

But nothing that was spoken among the latter could possibly reach the ears of the former.

The alcove was in pleasant shade this summer evening. Some one had asked leave of the others, and then had lowered the gas, to decrease the heat, as well as to subdue the light. The May moon, at its full, shone in through the open bay window, and softly illumined the interior, falling directly on the pale face of Abel Force, who occupied a large easy-chair in the midst of his party, who were seated around him, waiting in eager attention for his words.

The squire of Mondreer began to speak in a somewhat formal manner.

"My friends," he said, "I have asked you all to meet me here that I may explain to you some family matter that you have not hitherto understood, or rather, that you have entirely misunderstood up to this day."

The squire paused in some embarrassment.

Miss Sibby took advantage of the momentary silence to nudge Miss Susannah Grandiere and whisper:

"I knowed it. Everything as is hid, sez I, is sure to come out, sez I; but it's nothing ag'in Abel Force, whatever it is, sez I. I'll bet on the old squire every time, sez I."

Mr. Force went on:

"You have all taken—or seemed to take—much for granted in our lives which was not true. Now did you not?"

"Why—not that I know of, Force. I don't know of any mistakes we any of us ever made about you," exclaimed old Capt. Grandiere, answering for all his neighbors. "In what respect have we done you wrong?" he next inquired.

"In no respect have you done me wrong. You have only taken some things for granted and made some harmless mistakes."

"What mistakes?"

These questions helped the embarrassed squire in his awkward explanations. Perhaps he drew them out for the purpose.

"For instance," he replied, "you all took it for granted, when I married in Europe, that I had married a young lady who had never been married before."

"Yes, of course," replied the old skipper, while every one else listened in silent expectation.

"You never imagined that I had married a young widow."

"Good Heaven! No!" exclaimed the old sailor, opening his eyes to their widest extent. "None of us ever could have dreamed of such a thing. So Mrs. Force was a widow when you married her?"

"Yes; the widow of the late Prince Luigi Saviola, of Naples."

"Goo-oo-ood gracious! And you never let on a word about it to any of us!"

"There was no occasion. The way did not open to make such an announcement without apparent egotism," replied the squire, discreetly, but not very convincingly.

"I confess I do not see where the egotism would have been," said Miss Susannah Grandiere.

"There may be a difference of opinion on that head," said Abel Force. "I could not go up and down the country proclaiming aloud to all and sundry of my farmer neighbors that I had married the widow of the late Prince Luigi Saviola. Nor should I even mention the fact here among my old friends this evening but that new developments of circumstances have made it necessary to do so."

" 'Needs must when the devil drives,' sez I. Not that Abel Force has anything to do with the devil, sez I. No, indeed. I bet on Abel Force every time, sez I," muttered Miss Sibby, aside to Mrs. Hedge.

"Now, squire, speak right up. Tell us all about it. You look as if you couldn't come to the point. You have got something more to tell us besides that you married a beautiful young widow. Out with it, squire. We are all friends here," heartily exclaimed old Gideon Grandiere.

Thus backed up and encouraged, the embarrassed and hesitating master of Mondreer took heart of grace, and told the story of his wife's first marriage. Not the whole story, by a long deal! He suppressed much that did not concern his neighbors to be told, and would not have edified them to hear.

For instance, he never hinted a word about the runaway marriage of the fascinating Italian exile with the too romantic young school girl. He merely told of the marriage of Prince Luigi Saviola, of Naples, with the Lady Elfrida Glennon, only daughter of the Earl of

Enderby. Of their travels over the Continent, and of the birth of their only son at Geneva.

He breathed no syllable of the fatal duel in which the prince had fallen; but told them that he had died suddenly while on a visit to Paris; and that soon after his death his widow had returned to the protection of her father, in whose company he—Abel Force—had first met her in Switzerland; and that he had been so charmed with her that he had won her affections, and that he had married her some months later in England.

At this point of the story Abel Force paused for a few moments, and then said:

"It would be too long and tedious a tale to tell you how we both became separated from our only son—that is, my wife's son by her first marriage, and my son by adoption and by affection—the young man whom you have known as Roland Bayard, but, who, in truth, is no other than Rolando Saviola, the only son of the late Prince Luigi Saviola and of the Lady Elfrida, his wife. Enough that lately has come over from Europe this gentleman, Gen. Anglesea, the long-time friend of my wife's family, who was present at her marriage with the prince; who was present also at the death of the lately deceased, aged Prince Antonio Saviola, and is the appointed executor of his will. Gen. Anglesea has come to America in search of the heir, and has found him in the person of the young man whom, as I have said, you have known so long as Roland Bayard."

As Mr. Force concluded his narrative a silence of astonishment fell on the circle.

"And now," put in the earl, "I hope all our friends understand the position of my nephew here."

Old Capt. Grandiere started up and seized Roland's hand, and shook it heartily.

Little Rosemary slipped her slender fingers in those of the earl, and whispered:

"Didn't I tell you Roland was of patrician birth? Didn't I tell you he looked like you? I am not the least surprised."

The earl caressed the little hand that was resting in his, but made no reply in words.

"Yes, for all that I knew it all along, and am not surprised, I do feel as if I was hearing it all read out of a romance, by the evening fire, in Aunt Sukey's old room in the farmhouse," added Rosemary, dreamily.

Le followed the example of Capt. Grandiere, went up and shook Roland by the hand, whispering:

"I am heartily glad of your good fortune, old fellow —heartily glad! Not that any fortune, good or ill, could affect my friendship for you."

"It is not likely," smiled Roland. "If you did not lose faith in me when I was in the rôle of the pirate captain's mate, surely no amount of adversity could turn you against me. And as for prosperity, I know, Le, that mine gives you unselfish joy."

All now in turn shook hands with Roland, and wished him well.

The young man cordially responded to all this sympathetic pleasure.

Mr. Force's friends were not quite satisfied—all was not cleared up to their contentment. They wished to know how it happened that Roland had been separated from his parents in his infancy.

But the mystery, which has been revealed to the reader, was never made clear to them, though subsequently various reports got into circulation concerning the lost child—the most popular of which, originating no one knew how, was that Roland had been stolen by gypsies. This romance came finally to be received as the truth.

It was late that night when the party separated and retired to rest.

CHAPTER XLVII

MOTHER AND SON

The recovery of Elfrida Force was very rapid. When she awoke from sleep on the morning after her interview with her husband, she felt so free from pain and weariness, so refreshed in mind and body, that she wished to get up and dress, and go down into the drawing room to join her family circle. This the nurse dissuaded her from doing, but advised her to put on a wrapper, sit in an easy-chair, and receive any friends she might wish to see in her own room.

The first one she asked for was her husband. Abel Force came quickly, dismissed the attendant from the room, and sat down beside her, holding her hand in his own a few moments before either spoke.

The squire was the first to break the eloquent silence.

"Dearest, you will be glad to hear that our Roland is at liberty; is fully exonerated."

"Thank Heaven!" breathed the mother.

"The morning's papers give us the information that Stukely will be yielded up to the British authorities and will leave Washington to-day for New York, to sail on the *Scotia,* on Saturday, for Liverpool."

"Thank Heaven!" again breathed Elfrida Force.

"I have had an explanation with our friends and neighbors; have told them all that they need know, and nothing more," continued the squire.

For the first time since his entrance the lady looked uneasy.

"Do not distress yourself, my dear. I will tell you all that I said, and how I said it," he added.

And then he repeated, nearly word for word, all that

had passed in the alcove of the ladies' parlor on the preceding night.

"Oh, Abel, how well you have managed to shield me, unworthy that I am, from all reproach!" she murmured, in a tremulous voice.

"Nay, dear! Do not speak so of yourself. If I have tried to lift the burdens and dispel the shadows from about you, it is because it would have been unjust for you to suffer from them. And, Elfrida, I have had this morning an exhaustive interview with our son."

"Ah, yes! yes! What will Roland think of my long ignoring him?" sighed the mother.

"He knows now all about it—the cruel, slanderous deception practiced on you by the man Stukely, when he made you believe that the marriage with Saviola was illegal, and left you no other alternative than to do as you did. And no shadow of implied blame is felt by Roland—only reverential tenderness and compassion for all that you have had to suffer for so many years from the diabolical villainy of one man. Roland is impatient to see you, my dear, as soon as you can admit him."

"My incomparable husband!" breathed the lady, penetrated by her perception of his utter unselfishness and superiority to every feeling of jealousy.

"Ah! how you exaggerate, dear," he said, with a smile. Then:

"Will you see Roland?" he inquired.

"When you please," she answered.

He arose, stooped and kissed her forehead, and left the room.

In a few moments the door opened and Roland entered.

The blood rushed to the lady's face, and then left it paler than before. She held out both hands to receive him.

"My son! Oh, my son! Can you forgive me?" she wailed.

Roland dropped on one knee and lifted her hands to his lips, in silent reverence. Then he arose and folded her in his arms, still in silence.

"Speak to me, Roland," she said at last, when he had drawn a chair and seated himself at her side

"Dear mother," he said, very gently, "I have heard your whole story from the lips of my stepfather—my honored father, I should rather say, for truly he has done a father's part, and given a father's love to me—and I feel for him the deepest love, respect and compassion. I wish from my soul that at my hands the demon who has wronged you so bitterly could receive his punishment."

"No, no, my son. From your hands his punishment would be sinful revenge. From the hands of the law which has seized him it will be retributive justice. Roland, how much, if anything, can you remember of your infancy, before you were cast upon these shores?" she suddenly inquired.

"Not much very clearly, dear mother. But I do remember a country place, where there were many cows and some calves, fruit trees, flowers and a house covered all over with flowering vines. I remember a rosy-cheeked woman in a white cap and white apron, who used to wash and dress me, and another little boy of about my age, and give us our milk and bread in a room that had a bright red brick floor."

"Nothing more, Roland?"

"Oh, yes. I remember something that used to make a grand holiday for us, a great lady who used to come to see us, and bring cakes and sugar plums and toys and clothes. Then I remember being in a ship on the sea for many days, but cannot recall how I got there, or how I came away. These reminiscences I have often told to

Aunt Sibby, but neither she nor I could ever make out by much study where that home of my infancy could have been located, or what seas I had sailed over."

"And did no face, no voice here ever associate itself with those earlier memories?" inquired the mother.

"Yes," replied the young man. "I was but four years old when I last beheld the face of the beautiful woman who visited me at intervals, and whom I had been taught to call my aunt. But this last occasion was fixed in my memory from the childish delight I found in the hobby-horse she had brought down for me, and also by something very opposite that—my distress at seeing her great griefs and paroxysms of sobs and tears at leaving me. These impressed the lady's face and voice indelibly on my memory, so that the image and the tone survived everything else in my picture of the past. I was ten years old when I first saw 'Mrs. Force' at our school examination, but her face and her voice troubled me with fancies that they had both once been familiar and beloved. Mother! I remembered your presence in the home of my infancy, though I remembered little else about it; and I recalled your face and voice when I met you again six years later on this other side of the world, though I could not identify you with the angel of my fancy. Yet I always loved you in both characters, though I never ventured to show my affection; and I somehow perceived your love for me, though you never showed it!"

"A veil was between us," said Elfrida Force.

"Yes, a veil; but so thin that we saw each other through it. Why, mother, dear, even our little Rosemary perceived this, for she often told me that she believed you loved her for my sake more than for her own. To-day she told me that when she was in distress on my account, it was only to you she could go for sympathy."

"And that was true," murmured the lady.

"And, mother, dear, what treasures I have realized in my new-found sisters. Odalite—always kind to me because Leonidas loved me—Odalite has been most affectionate to-day. Wynnette—charming Wynnette—has been so openly fond of me as to rouse the jealousy of Mr. Samuel Grandiere, who remonstrated in elegant style this way: 'Drot it all, Wynnette! You make more of Roland than you ever did of me, though I am to be your husband.' "

"And what did our Wynnette say to that?" inquired Mrs. Force, with a smile.

"She answered: 'Well? It is written that a man shall forsake his father and his mother and cleave to his wife; but it is nowhere written that a woman shall forsake her darling brother to cleave to another fellow.' And she hugged me tighter and kissed me closer than before."

"And little Elva?" inquired the lady.

"Sweet Elva! Tender, loving Elva! She could not ever have been sweeter, kinder, tenderer to me than she has always been. Elva is the sweetest of all my sweet sisters."

"She is a dear child," breathed the lady. Then, after a little pause—"And Rosemary?" she inquired.

"Mother, with your consent—and I am sure we shall have your consent—Rosemary will be my wife. Dear, true-hearted little mite! She would have given herself to me even if I had been nothing more than a little skipper's mate, under the ban of suspected piracy! Her love for me was so warm—her faith in me so true—I am glad that I have the rank and wealth to offer her which will make me acceptable to her relations. But, mother, dear, Gen. Anglesea is waiting to speak to you."

"Then go and bring him in; and, Roland, you need not retire," said the lady.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE MEETING OF OLD FRIENDS

ANGUS ANGLESEA entered the room, ushered in by Roland and followed by Mr. Force.

Mrs. Force arose from her chair to meet her old friend, who took her hand and bowed over it respectfully.

"I am very glad to see you after so many years," said Mrs. Force, as Roland drew forward a chair for the visitor.

"I wish with all my heart and soul that our meeting had been earlier! It would then have saved much misunderstanding and suffering," said Gen. Anglesea, with a deep sigh, as he took his seat by her side.

"The past is past," said the lady.

"Every one in this world has something to bear. All things considered, we have had but a small share of the universal burden," cheerfully remarked Abel Force.

"I have brought some very important documents here to place in your hands," said Anglesea, beginning to sort a parcel of papers that he held.

"You have taken much trouble to bring me these documents. How can I thank you sufficiently?" murmured the lady.

"But I need no thanks for doing my duty! This is the will of the late Antonio Saviola, by which he leaves all his possessions to his grandnephew, Rolando Saviola," said the general, laying the largest document on the small stand in front of the lady's chair.

She bowed, and took it up.

"This is the certificate of your marriage with Luigi Saviola, and this a certificate of the baptism of your son. These documents were necessary to establish your son's

right to the inheritance of the Saviola estates," he continued, placing two other papers on the table.

These also the lady took up, with a bow of thanks.

"Mr. Force will tell you how all these came into my possession, if he has not already done so. And now, dear lady, having surrendered my trust, I must take my leave for the present. I have been cautioned by your physician, who is waiting in the parlor below, not to make my visit too long. I shall remain in Washington some time, and I hope I shall be permitted to see you often," said Anglesea, as he arose to leave the room.

"Must you go? Then return soon. Come often. Do come and spend the evening with us. I am quite recovered, I assure you, and shall join my family party in the drawing room after dinner," said the lady, detaining the hand that he had given her.

"I will do so with pleasure," returned the general, and with a low bow he relinquished her hand and left the room.

His exit was followed by the entrance of the doctor to make his daily visit. He expressed much satisfaction on finding his patient so much improved. And when Mrs. Force spoke of her wish to join her family in the drawing room, the doctor made no objection to the proposed measure.

As soon as he had gone, the lady dismissed her other two visitors, Abel Force and Roland, telling them that she meant to dress and go down into the parlor, where they might rejoin her.

The two men left the room.

A half hour later, Elfrida Force was seated in the alcove at the rear of the saloon, surrounded by her daughters, her young friends, and her old Maryland neighbors, all of whom rejoiced over her as over one who, if not risen from the dead, had at least passed safely through a terrible crisis and risen from a most dangerous illness.

All the gentlemen of their circle were absent, having gone with Roland, who was to pass through some necessary formalities before he could be released from bonds and set entirely at liberty.

So it turned out that the large party in the alcove was a "hen convention." And the subject they discussed was a double wedding, when and where to come off.

Leonidas had that day pleaded for an immediate marriage, urging, with much reason, the long time that he and his beloved had been obliged to wait, and the repeated disappointments they had been fated to suffer.

And Mr. Force had replied that he would consult Mrs. Force on the subject and give him an answer as soon as possible. Mr. Force had, in fact, resolved to leave the matter to be determined by his wife.

Roland had also pleaded for an early wedding, arguing that he would be compelled to go to Italy to take possession of his estates, and that after all that he and his sweetheart had endured, they might really expect to be made happy.

Mrs. Hedge and Miss Grandiere promised to take the matter into consideration, and give him an answer in due time.

And now all the women and girls were freely discussing the subject.

There should be a double wedding—that was a fixed fact. Leonidas and Odalite, Roland and Rosemary should be married at the same place and at the same time—but in what place and at what time? In the city of Washington, within a week, or in St. Mary's County, within a month?

That was the question that occupied the ladies' circle.

There was so much to be said on both sides. It would save time, trouble and expense to have the double wedding come off in Washington. But, then, as Roland and Rosemary were to sail for Europe immediately after

their marriage, it seemed a pity that they should not look once more upon old scenes and meet once more old friends before their departure.

You see the matter resolved itself at length into a question of convenience or of sentiment. And, inasmuch as it was a convention of women who sat upon this subject, the decision may be anticipated, as given in the favor of sentiment.

The weddings, therefore, were to be celebrated with great pomp at All Faith Church, Mondreer and Oldfield, in St. Mary's County—that is to say, the double marriage ceremony was settled to be performed at All Faith Church, the wedding breakfast to be served for both parties at Mondreer, and the evening reception to be held at Oldfield.

After which Leonidas and Odalite would depart to spend their honeymoon at their own little estate of Greenbushes, and Roland and Rosemary would leave for New York en route for Europe.

The ladies had settled this quite to their satisfaction before the gentlemen all returned with the good news that all formalities had been duly observed, and now Roland was a free man, without the smallest suspicion of a blemish on his honor.

"And now," said Abel Force, "we may all go down into Maryland as soon as we please, and show Enderby and Anglesea what our country life is like, for they have both promised to be our guests for a season."

"That will be delightful, and I am rejoiced to hear it," said Mrs. Force, very cordially. At which the two invited guests bowed.

Later on that evening, when Elfrida Force found herself alone with her husband in their chamber, she said:

"We cannot go down to Mondreer in less than a week. I must write to-morrow to have the house prepared for the reception of our visitors. And while that work is

going on I must do some shopping here for the two girls. You know they cannot be married without clothes."

"Without clothes! Good Lord, no!" exclaimed the squire, and he gave in immediately.

The next day Mrs. Force wrote to her housekeeper at Mondreer, addressing that worthy woman as Mrs. Anglesea, lest, with her true name on the envelope, the missive might not reach her, or if it did, might offend her; but—addressing her so for the last time, for after announcing the advent of her family and visitors at Mondreer, and instructing the housekeeper in regard to the preparations to be made for their accommodation, Mrs. Force wrote briefly of the facts which had come to light concerning the impostor who had called himself Col. Angus Anglesea, but who was really Byrne Stukely, an ex-midshipman in the royal navy, long an adventurer, and lately a pirate. She suppressed only one fact—the existence of Stukely's wife and family at Angleton—and this she kept in mercy to the deceived woman, since there could be no good come of revealing it. She ended by advising the Californian to drop the name of Anglesea, to which the man who had given it to her had no sort of right, and to take back that of her late husband, who had had every claim on her love and faith. She counseled her to do this the more especially as the real Angus Anglesea was to be one of their visitors at Mondreer.

Having dispatched this letter by the morning's mail, Mrs. Force ordered a carriage, and in company with Mrs. Hedge, Odalite and Rosemary, drove out to purchase wedding finery for the two brides-elect.

Two days later all the Grandieres, together with Mrs. Hedge, Rosemary and Miss Sibby Bayard, left Washington for St. Mary's, partly on account of the expense and inconvenience of sleeping in lodging houses and eat-

ing at hotel restaurants, and partly as an advance guard to go before and prepare the way for the wedding parties.

Mr. and Mrs. Force, with their family and guests, expected to follow in about ten days—or as soon as the wedding outfit for the two brides could be completed, for the lady had undertaken the supervision of that part of the program.

Young Sam Grandiere had pleaded hard to be allowed to marry Wynnette at the same time that Leonidas was to marry Odalite, and Roland Rosemary. And neither Mr. nor Mrs. Force raised any objection. But Wynnette herself resisted the proposal in a characteristic way.

"No," she said, "we must not think of 'marrying or giving in marriage,' while our countrymen are falling in battle or dying in hospitals by thousands and tens of thousands—many also perishing for want of help, and not hands enough at leisure from business or from pleasure to give it! No! I suppose it is necessary that these others should marry for good reasons, but you and I must wait for better times, Sam, because, as soon as the double wedding is over and the two 'happy' pairs gone, Elva and I intend to return to Washington and go to work in the hospitals."

"In the hospitals! What can you two do?" had been Sam's amazed exclamation and incredulous question.

"We may not be first-rate nurses, but we can help the nurses; we can obey orders, step lightly, speak softly, fetch and carry, and do any work we are put to do, and we mean to do it!"

"And your father and mother mean to let you?"

"Of course they do! That is what we all came home from Europe for. And papa and mamma mean to offer their services, too."

"Well! If it were not you and your parents, Wynnette, I should say that you were all the biggest fools in

the world, and that each one of you was the biggest fool of all the rest!" exclaimed the provoked lover.

"And if it were not you, who couldn't hit me back because you are a man and I am a girl, I should box your ears soundly for saying that, Mr. Samuel Grandiere!"

"Oh, I shouldn't mind that," said Sam, with a laugh.

And the honest young pair parted good friends, Sam going to escort his relations on their journey to St. Mary's.

CHAPTER XLIX

A DOUBLE WEDDING AT ALL FAITH

"It's a habit he gibs hisse'f, ole mist'ess! Nuffin' 'tall but a cussed, infunally habit he gibs hisse'f! And he ought to be broke ob it, if it breaks his neck! He to hab de darin' impidence to take a rale gemman's name an' to go paradin' up an' down de yeth an' roun' an' roun' de worl' a-deceivin' ob young damsins like Miss Odilly an' ole widdies like you—de owdacious willyun! Wot you reckon dey'll do wid him, ole mist'ess?"

Such were the comments and such was the question of Luce, after hearing the letter of Mrs. Force which the housekeeper of Mondreer, with her usually perfect openness, had read aloud to the colored cook.

"Wot yer reckon dey gwine to do wid dat 'funally willyun, ole mist'ess?" again demanded Luce, seeing that the other woman was studying the letter in silence.

"They'll hang him! That's what they'll do with him. He's been sent to England—in chains, I hope—and they'll hang him! By all accounts they don't fool with such people as we do. They hang 'em. And now, Luce, don't you ever dare to call me by that devil's name

again! And if anybody else ever does call me so, I'll sue 'em for slander and put the damages as high as the law allows!" exclaimed the housekeeper.

"All yight, ole mist'ess. I won't call yer dat. But wot mus' I call yer?"

"Call me Mrs. Wright. Wright is my right name, and I shall always write it so, for all of that marriage rite between me and that yonder beat."

"Jes' so, ole mist'ess—I'll 'membeh!"

"It was my dear old man's name, and I ought never to have changed it. And I never will again, so help me! And now, Luce, you and me has got to stir our stumps and make this house jamb, for there's not only two weddings—and Lord knows one wedding makes fuss enough in a house!—but there's a whole raft of foreign company coming to stay."

"I t'ought as dere was on'y two st'ange gemmen."

"Well, but one's a lord and t'other a lion! And them two's as much as a regiment! So look alive, nigger, and put your best foot first before the foreigners," said the housekeeper, with vim.

While active preparations were in progress at Mondreer, all the Grandieres, with Mrs. Hedge, little Rosemary and Miss Sibby Bayard, returned to the neighborhood.

The sensational news they brought from Washington spread "like wildfire" through the county, and the capture of the *Kitty* by the *Argente;* the taking of the *Argente* by the *Eagle;* the detection of the true character of the adventurer whom they had known and lionized as Col. Angus Anglesea; the discovery of Roland Bayard's parentage; the approaching marriage of Leonidas with Odalite, and of Roland with Rosemary—formed the topics of conversation at all the tea tables and in all the barrooms for many miles around.

In the height of all this gossip, the Forces, with their two foreign guests, returned to Mondreer.

They immediately became the objects of daily, yes, hourly calls. Every acquaintance of the family, high and low, rich and poor, came to welcome them back to Mondreer, and all were received with courtesy.

Invitations were sent out "broadcast" for the double wedding to be celebrated at All Faith Church on the first of the ensuing June.

When that day dawned at length the sun arose in a sky as bright and blue and shone upon a world as green and fresh as ever blessed the bridals of youth and beauty.

At a very early hour the church was filled with the nearest friends of the wedding parties, while scores of invited guests who could not press into the building for want of space sat in their carriages that filled the grove.

At ten o'clock the venerable clergyman appeared in the chancel, robed in his white surplice, and attended by his curate and clerk, and with their appearance a whisper went around the congregation that the bridal procession was approaching.

This was true. A moment later the doors were noiselessly thrown open, and the ushers entered, standing on the right and on the left. Then the bride, Odalite, appeared leaning on the arm of her father. Her dress on this occasion was very plain and simple—a white silk, trained, and a long, white tulle veil, with a very slender wreath of orange buds, gloves, boots, handkerchiefs and bouquet to match, but no jewelry. Behind her walked her bridesmaids, Wynnette and Elva, girls even more simply dressed in white than herself.

A few steps in the rear came the second bridal train—little Rosemary Hedge, led by her greatuncle, Capt. Gideon Grandiere. She looked like a light, floating cloud, with veil and dress all of snow-white tulle, looped here and there with lilies of the valley. Behind

her walked her two bridesmaids, the little Elk girls, in simple white organdie dresses.

Last of all came Mrs. Force, with the Earl of Enderby and other friends, and Mrs. Hedge, with Miss Susannah Grandiere.

As Odalite was led up to the altar by her father, Leonidas Force came out of the vestry, followed by his groomsman, Sam Grandiere, and joined them. The circle, immediately arranged itself before the altar—the friends of the pair standing behind and on the right and left.

The venerable rector opened his book and the rites commenced.

Odalite was the palest bride that ever willingly gave her hand to her chosen bridegroom; but, then, the shadow of the past overclouded her spirit.

Leonidas perceived this, and pressed her hand in silent sympathy and reassuring tenderness.

The rites went on to the end. The benediction was given, and the bride and groom were warmly congratulated.

Then the newly married pair, with their attendants, withdrew to the rear to make way for the second wedding.

Old Capt. Grandiere led his niece, Rosemary Hedge, up to the altar, followed by her bridesmaids. There they were met by Roland Saviola and his groomsman, Ned Grandiere. They formed before the altar, their friends and relatives standing behind and on either side.

Again the rector advanced and opened his book, and amid the deep silence commenced the solemn rites.

When they were ended, and the blessing was bestowed, the bride kissed, and the bridegroom shaken by the hand, both the wedding parties withdrew to the vestry to register the marriages.

After this they made very slow progress out of the

church, their way being impeded by their acquaintances, who left the pews to offer their congratulations.

At length they were permitted to enter their carriages and take the road to Mondreer, where the marriage breakfast was to be given.

It was a great success, of course. The guests remained until two o'clock, when they departed, well pleased, and leaving their entertainers to take a few hours' repose before repairing to Oldfield for the evening's ball.

At the farm they all literally:

"Danced all night till broad daylight."

Then, after coffee, the two brides and grooms put on their traveling dresses and took leave of their friends.

Leonidas and Odalite went to Greenbushes to spend their honeymoon quietly.

Roland and Rosemary left for Washington, en route for New York and Paris. Mrs. Hedge and Miss Grandiere wept freely at parting with their darling, but were consoled by the assurance from Roland that the trip across the Atlantic was nothing at all in these days, and that he should certainly bring Rosemary back to spend Christmas with them, and afterward, if they pleased, take both of them to Europe to spend a long time with Rosemary and himself.

To Miss Sibby Bayard, who had been a true mother to the young man, and who was weeping silently and wiping her eyes surreptitiously, as if she were ashamed of her tears, Roland said:

"Dearest Aunt Sibby, though I seem to be leaving you finally, yet it is not so. You will see me much oftener, and for much longer periods, than you used to do when I was mate on a merchantman and away to sea three years at a time. Besides, you will come and stay

with us on the other side as often and as long as you please—forever, if you will. We should like it."

"Yes, honey! Never mind me! I'm not crying! What should I cry for, when you are so happy? I love you too true for that! Rale love, sez I, always rejoices in the good of its objects, sez I! And them as snivels at the happiness of their children, sez I, hasn't much love, but a deal of self in their souls, sez I!" Miss Sibby concluded, with a glance of reproach on poor Mrs. Hedge and Miss Grandiere.

At last they were gone.

And the invited guests soon followed.

Oldfield was left to itself, except for the presence of the Forces, who, being very tired, had accepted Mrs. Grandiere's pressing invitation to remain and rest for the whole day. They all retired to their rooms to lie down and sleep—all except the California widow, who, with her instincts of order, volunteered to help to put the farmhouse "to rights" after the party. She called to her aid Luce, who had come to Oldfield in attendance on her mistress.

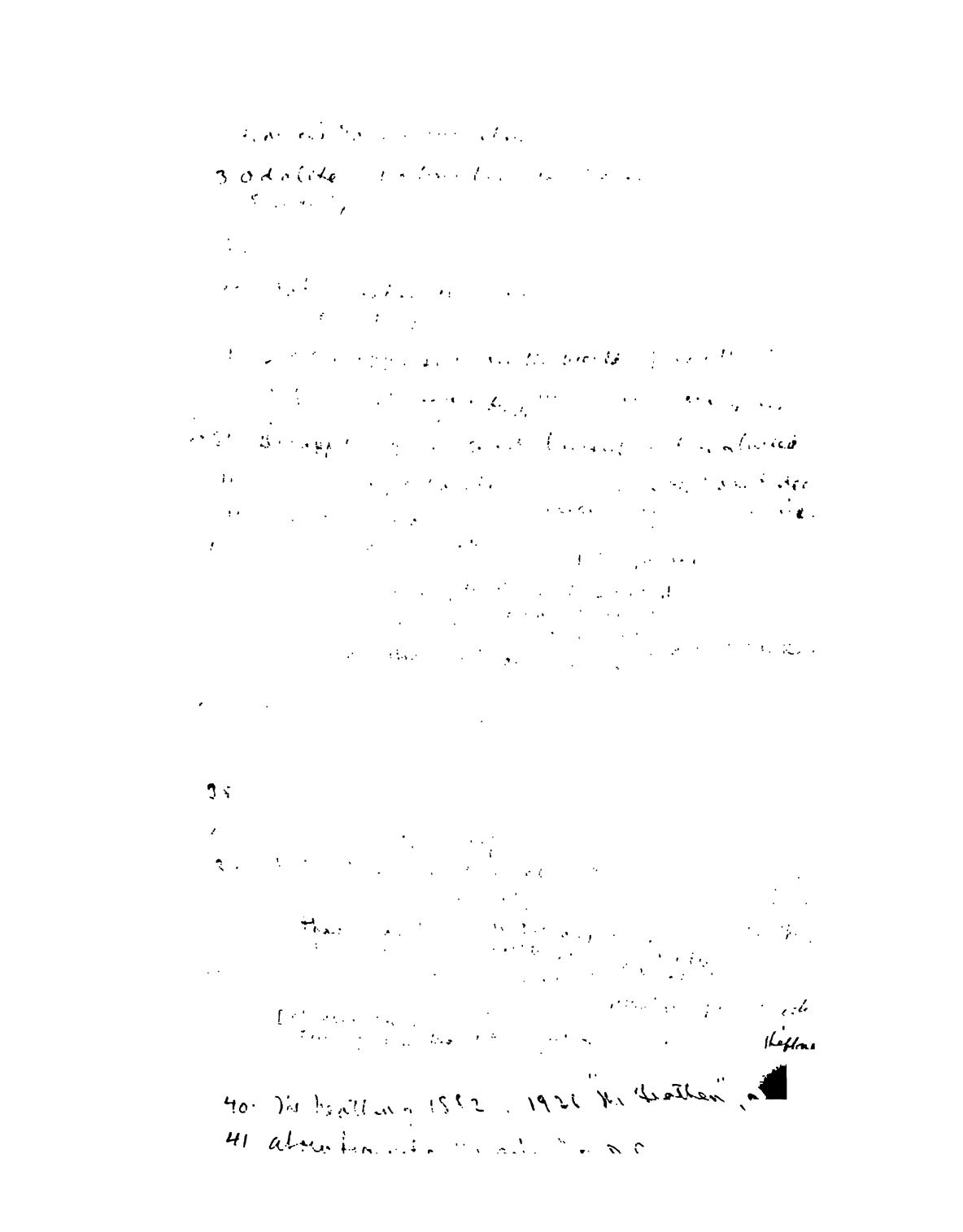
Luce's eyes were red, and her nose was swollen through much crying.

"Now, come out of that, you fool!" exclaimed the widow, who had finished with her own crying.

"I can't help ob it!" sobbed Luce. "Dese yere boys an' gals is 'nough to break a body's heart! Allers, eberlastin' gettin' married world without end! But wot's de use ob talkin'? It's a habit dey gibs deirse'ves! Nuffin' 'tall but a habit dey gibs deirse'ves! An' dey'll nebber be broke ob it—nebber!"

"Oh, hush, Luce! Look up! Look up, woman! There is a good omen! The sun is rising!"

THE END



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